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NEW YORK Saturday Journal

A POPULAR PAPER FOR RECREATION & PROFIT

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Vol. III.

E. F. Beadle, William Adams, David Adams, PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, JULY 6, 1872.

TERMS IN ADVANCE

One copy, four months, \$1.00.
One copy, one year, 2.00.
Two copies, one year, 3.00.

No. 121.



"Let 'em surround me! I feel wolfish to-day and I think it'll do me good to let off some of my extra steam among 'em."

LIGHTNING JO;

The Terror of the Santa Fe Trail.

A TALE OF THE PRESENT DAY.

BY CAPT. J. F. C. ADAMS,

Author of "Old Grizzly, the Bear-Tamer," "The Phantom Princess," etc.

CHAPTER I. THE CRY FOR HELP!

"TO THE COMMANDANT AT FORT ADAMS:
"For God's sake send us help at once. We have been fighting the Comanches for two days; half our men are killed and wounded, and we can not hold out much longer. But we have women and children with us, and we shall fight to the last and die game. Send help within an hour's delay, or it's all up."
J. T. SHIELDS."

Covered with dust, and reeking with sweat, with bloody nostril and dilated eye, the black mustang thundered up to the gate of the fort, staggered as if drunken, and then with a wheezing moan, shivered from nose to hoof, and with an awful cry, like that of a dying person, his flanks heaved and he dropped dead to the ground, his lithe, sinewy rider leaping from the saddle, just in time to escape being crushed to death.

Scarcely less frightful and alarming was the appearance of the horseman, so covered with dust and grime, that no one could tell whether he was Indian, African or Cauca-

sian; but, whoever he was, he showed that he was alive to the situation, by running straight through the gate of the stockades, into the parade-ground, where pausing in a bewildered sort of way, he glanced hurriedly around, and then shouted:

"Where's the commandant? Quick! some one tell me!"

Colonel Greaves chanced to be standing at that moment in converse with a couple of his officers, and upon hearing the cry, he moved toward the stranger with a rapid tread, but with a certain dignified deliberation that always marked his movements. Knowing him to be the man for whom he was searching, the messenger did not wait for him to approach, but fairly bounded toward him, and thrusting a piece of dirty paper, scrawled over with lead pencil, looked imploringly in his face, while he read the words given above.

And as the colonel read, his brows knitted and his face paled. He felt the urgency of that despairing appeal, and he saw the almost utter impossibility of complying with it.

"When was this written?" he asked, of the dust-begrimed courier.

"At daybreak this morning," was the prompt reply.

"How far away are your friends?"

"Forty miles as the crow flies, and I have never drawn rein since my horse started, till he fell dead just outside the gate."

"How many men are there in this fix?"

"There were twenty men, and a dozen women and children. When I left, about half that number were alive, and whether any are still living, God only knows; I don't."

"I hope it is not as bad as that," said the colonel, again glancing at the paper, and involuntarily sighing, for despite his schooling upon the frontier, he felt keenly the anguish of the sad plight. "Not as bad as that, I trust; for if they have held out two days, we may hope that they are able to hold out still longer. But how is it that you succeeded in reaching us, when they could not?"

Feeling that some explanation was expected of him, the messenger spoke hurriedly, but as calmly as possible:

"Twenty of us were conveying a party of women and children—the families of merchants and officers at Santa Fe—through the Indian country, on our way to that city, when the Comanches came down on us, in a swarm of hundreds, and finding there was no escaping a fight, we ran our wagons in a circle, shut the women and horses inside, and then it seemed as if hell was let loose upon us. Yelling, shouting, screeching, charging was kept up all that day into the night. We picked off the red devils with every shot, but the more we killed the

thicker they came, seeming to spring up from the very ground, until the prairie was covered with them. At night we had a little rest, and we thought perhaps they would draw off and let us alone. Why they didn't make a charge upon our camp that night, I can not tell; but they only sent in a few stray shots, more than one of which was fatal, and at daylight the fun began again, and never stopped till the sun went down, when there wasn't much of a pause then. That was yesterday, and we had it all through the night, and since we halted the day before yesterday, there hasn't been a drop of water for horse, man, woman or child, so that you can see what an awful strait they are in."

By this time quite a group had gathered about the messenger, enchain by the thrilling tale he told, the truth of which was so eloquently attested by his manner and appearance.

"But you haven't told us how you got here," reminded the colonel, as the man paused for a moment. "You have succeeded at least in insuring your safety."

"We made up our minds about midnight last night that something of the kind had to be done, as it was our only hope. Two of our men tried to steal through, crawling on hands and knees, but both were caught within a hundred yards of the camp—one shot dead, and the other so badly tomahawked, that he died within an hour of getting back to us. So I told Shields to let me have his mustang, which is the fleetest creature on the plains, and I would either get through or do as the others did. So, just about daybreak, I crammed that slip of paper in the side of my shoe, stretched out flat on the mustang's back and gave him the word.

Away he went like a thunderbolt, with the rifles cracking all about my ears, and the Comanches thundering down upon me like so many bloodhounds. I felt more than one bullet in my legs, and I knew the horse was hurt pretty bad—it didn't hinder his going, and the noble fellow kept straight along till he brought me here. But you act as if you didn't know me."

"Know you?" repeated the amazed colonel. "I never saw you before."

CHAPTER II. THE ANSWER.

THE powdered, begrimed face was seen to expand into something like a grin, and raising his hand, the courier literally scraped the dust from his cheeks and eyebrows, and then, as he removed his hat, a general exclamation of amazement escaped all.

"Jim Gibbons! is it you?" called out the commandant, as he recognized a man who had been employed at his fort a year before. "I thought your voice had a familiar sound, but then your own mother would not have recognized you."

"But come," added Gibbons, moving about uneasily, "we'll talk over this matter some other time. I've brought you the message, colonel," he added, making a graceful military salute. "I had heard in St. Louis that you had been sent to another command, else I would have known whom to ask for. Now, can you help us or not?" The officer folded his arms behind his back and walked slowly over the parade-ground, signifying by a nod of his head, that Gibbons should do the same.

"I must help you," he said, in a low voice; "such a call as that can not pass unheeded. But, Jim, you see my fix. We ought to have a full regiment to garrison this fort, and the Government allows me but six hundred. Two hundred of these men are on a scout up toward the mountains, and won't be in till dark. Do you know there is some reason to fear an attack upon the fort, from a combination of several tribes under the direction of the infernal Comanche, Swico-Cheque?"

"Why he is at the head of the devils that have our friends walled in. I know him too well, and have seen him a dozen times, circling around on his horse, yelling like a thousand panthers, and firing about a dozen shots a minute. I have fired at him five or six times, but never grazed him once."

"Well, I think it is more than likely that we shall have an attack from him. Now, you know something of life on the plains; tell me how many men you need to bring your friends into the fort."

"We ought to have a hundred, at the least."

"You ought to have five hundred, at the smallest calculation. I tell you the Indians in this part of the country are among the best fighters and hunters in the world, and if I send a hundred men out into the country, where they are sure to come against old Swico and his band, the chances are that they will all be served as were Colonel Fetterman's men at Fort Phil Kearney, a month or two ago. You know that over a hundred of them went out, and never a one was ever seen alive again."

"But, if I understand that matter right," replied Gibbons, who was becoming impatient and uneasy at the delay, "these men were entrapped and massacred; I don't think there is any likelihood of that in our case. But, colonel, pardon me; I wish to know your decision, either the one way or the other, at once. If you conclude that you can not spare a hundred men to go forty miles away to help this party, then let me have a fresh horse. I will return, sail in and go under with the rest."

And Gibbons attested the earnestness of what he said, by starting to move away; but Colonel Greaves caught his arm.

"Hold on! you shall have the men you need. I have been trying ever since I heard your story to decide whether I ought to risk the safety of a hundred men to save one-tenth that number; but I can't think. It seems to me that I hear the wailing cry of those women and children coming over the prairie, and if I should turn my back upon them, their voices and moans would follow me ever afterward in my waking and sleeping hours. Yes, Jim, you shall have the hundred men. I will lead them myself, and we will make hot work in that gulch before we get through."

The colonel, having made his decision, did not hesitate for a moment. Turning sharply upon his heel, he beckoned to his adjutant, and gave him peremptory orders to make ready a hundred men for a scout into the Indian country. They were to be armed with rifle, revolver and cavalry swords, and to be mounted on the best horses at the fort.

As he turned about to say a few words to Gibbons, he saw the tears making furrows down his grimy cheeks. He attempted to speak, but for a few seconds was unable to articulate. Taking the hand of the colonel, he finally said, in a choking voice:

"I thank you, colonel, and God grant that this may not be too late. Oh, if you could have seen those pleading faces of the women, those cries of the helpless children for one swallow of water, the dead bodies of the men, that we had drawn in behind the wagons out of reach of the red-skins, and the screeching devils all around you, would send your whole garrison to their rescue. Where is Lightning Jo?"

"He went out with the scouting-party this morning, and that is what caused me to hesitate about sending the company to the help of your friends. I always feel

tolerably comfortable when I know that he is at the head of the men."

While the bustle of hurried preparation was going on within the fort, Gibbons accompanied the colonel to his lodgings, where he washed the dust from his person, partook of water and refreshments, and explained more in detail the particulars of the misfortune of his friends. He was equally desirous that the wonderful scout, Lightning Jo, should lead the party, as he was a host of himself, and having lived from earliest childhood in the south-west, he was as thorough an Indian as the great chieftain Swico-Cheque himself, and the daring Comanches held him in greater terror than any other living personage.

But the case was one that admitted of no delay—even if it was certain that Jo would be in at the end of an hour. Half that time might decide the fate of the little Spartan band struggling so bravely in Dead Man's Gulch, and the release of the beleaguered ones was now the question above all others.

It required but a very short time for the party to complete their preparations. Out of the seemingly inextricable confusion of stamping horses, and men running hither and thither, all at once appeared full one hundred men, mounted, armed and officered precisely as they had been directed.

An orderly stood holding the horse of Colonel Greaves, until he was ready to mount, while another was at Gibbons' disposal.

The next moment the two latter had leaped into their saddles, and placing themselves at the head of the cavalcade, rode out of the stockade upon the open prairie, which had scarcely been done, when a new and most gratifying surprise awaited them. The march was instantly halted, and the face of Colonel Greaves and of Gibbons lit up with pleasure.

CHAPTER III. LIGHTNING JO.

That which arrested the attention of the company riding out of the stockade of Fort Adams, was the sight of another party of horsemen coming through a range of hills about half a mile distant, one glance only being sufficient to identify them as the scouts already referred to as being under the guidance and leadership of the great western celebrity, Lightning Jo.

"Now, that's what I call lucky," exclaimed Colonel Greaves. "Jo is the very man of all others that we need."

The horsemen rode down the declivity at an easy gallop, and shortly reined up in front of the stockade, with a graceful salute, and an action that indicated that he awaited the commands of his superior officer.

The scouts, or hunters, had turned their time to good account, as was shown by a number of buffalo carcasses, or rather the choice portions of such, supported across the saddles of their animals; the appearance of the beasts, too, indicated that many of them had been subjected to the hardest kind of riding.

A few words explained to Lightning Jo the business about to be undertaken, and he at once assumed his position as leader of the company that had just prepared to start, the colonel withdrawing into the fort again, where it was his manifest duty to remain, while the desperate attempt to relieve the beleaguered party in Dead Man's Gulch was being made.

The scout did not take a fresh horse, and when pressed to do so, he declared that his mustang was as capable of a fifty miles tramp, as he was upon the morning he started upon the hunt from which he had just returned.

"Come, boys! business is business," said he, in his crisp, sharp tone, as his steed carried him by one or two bounds to the head of the cavalcade he was to lead. "Come, Gibbons, keep yer place alongside me, and yer can explain as we ride along."

And as the company of brave men galloped to the southward on their errand of mercy, each man a hero, and all with set teeth and an unalterable determination in their hearts to do all that mortal man could do to save the despairing little band that had sent its wall of anguish across the prairie, we will improve the occasion by glancing at the remarkable man who acted as their leader.

Lightning Jo had gained his appellation from the wonderful quickness of his movements, and his almost miraculous skill as a scout. His celerity of movement was incredible, while his equally astonishing strength excited the wonder of the most famous bordermen of the day. It was a well-established fact that Lightning Jo, a couple of years before, at Fort Laramie, had been forced into a personal encounter with a badgering pugilist, who was on his return to the States from California, and who had the reputation of being one of the most scientific hitters that had ever entered the prize ring, and who on the occasion referred to was so completely polished off by Jo, that he lay a month at the fort before he recovered from his injuries.

It was said, and there was every reason to believe it, that he was capable of running miles with the speed of the swiftest mustang of the prairie; that he had traversed the Llano Estacado back and forth, times without number, on foot, passing through the very heart of the Comanche country, without any attempt to disguise himself, or conceal his identity in any way; and yet there was not a mark upon his person to attest the dangers through which he had passed scathless and unharmed.

His horsemanship was perfect in its way, and no living Comanche—the most wonderful riders of the Western Continent—had been known to exceed, and very few to equal him. For the amusement of those gathered at some of the posts which he had visited, he had ridden his mustang at full speed and bare-back, throwing himself from one side to the other, and firing from beneath the neck or belly of the animal, picking up his hat from the earth when galloping at the same headlong rate, striking a match upon a stone on the ground and carrying the blaze lighted in his hand. He had thrown the lasso, with such skill, as to catch the hoof of the plunging buffalo, and then by a flint of the rope, flung the kicking brute flat upon his side, as the daring rider thundered past, and slapped his hat in the eyes of the terrified animal. He could fling the coil with the unerring certainty of a rifle-shot, and would manipulate the rope into as many fantastical convolutions as a Chinese conjurer.

His prowess with the rifle was equally marked, and the tales of his achievements in many instances, that we would not believe were we to repeat them. He carried a long, murderous-looking weapon, the mountings of which were of solid silver, and

had been presented to him by one of his many friends, whom he had been the instrument of saving.

At the home of his old mother at Santa Fe—the only living relative he had upon earth—he had rifles, swords, guns and every manner of weapon, of the most costly and valuable nature, that had been given him by grateful friends. His revered parent during his absence was literally overwhelmed with attentions and kindnesses by virtue of her relationship to Lightning Jo, the scout and guide who had proved such a blessing to the settlers of, and travelers through the West.

The hero was about thirty years of age, slim and tall to attenuation, with high cheekbones, eyes of midnight blackness that snapped fire when he was roused, and long hair, as stiff, wiry and black as the tail of his mustang. His countenance was swarthy, and with a little "touching up" he might have deceived Swico himself into the belief that he was one of his own warriors. This was the more easy as Jo spoke the Comanche tongue with the fluency of a genuine member of that warlike tribe; but he scorned such suggestions when made to him, declaring that he was able to take care of himself anywhere and in any crowd, no matter who were his friends or who were his enemies, an assertion which no one cared to dispute in a practical way.

Looking at his profile as he rode along over the prairie at a swifd gallop, it would have been seen that his nose was large, thin and sharp, the chin rather prominent, and the lips thin. The mouth was rather large, and the upper lip shaded by a thin, silky mustache of the same jetty hue as his eyes. The rest of his face was totally devoid of beard, except a little furze in front of his ears. He had never used the razor, nor did he expect to do so.

Of course he sat his horse like a centaur, and as he rode along, those keen, restless eyes of his wandered and roved from side to side, almost unconsciously on his part, as he was ever on the alert for the first appearance of danger. Such in brief were a few of the noticeable points of the great scout, Lightning Jo, who was a leader of the party of rescue, and who is to play such a prominent part in the thrilling events we are about to narrate.

As he rode beside Gibbons, whose anxiety was of the most intense character, and who could not avoid giving frequent expression to it, the scout at length said:

"Just stop that 'ere fretting of yours, now, Gib; 'cause it don't pay; don't you see we're all stretching out on that 'ere forty miles, just as fast as horse-flesh kin stand it? Wal, that being so, where's the use of fuming?"

"I know, Jo, but how can a person help it when he knows not whether his friends are dead or alive? There is philosophy in your advice about whining and complaining, and it reminds me of one of the members of the party—a young lady, whose disposition had something heavenly in it."

"Who was she?" asked the scout, in an indifferent way.

"Her name, I believe, was Manning—Lizzie Manning."

"What!" exclaimed Lightning Jo, almost bounding from his saddle, "is she there, in that infernal place? How in the name of Heaven did she get there?"

"She was one of the party that left St. Louis, and of course shared our dangers the same as all."

"The sweetest, purest, best little piece of calico that has been heard," repeated the scout to himself. "God save her, for she's worth all the rest. Come, boys," he called out to those behind him, "ride your horses as you never rid 'em afore. I'd dash through fire, water, smoke, brimstone and blazes, to save that gal!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE PARTY IN DEAD MAN'S GULCH.

LEAVING Lightning Jo and his party riding at a tremendous rate over the prairie to the rescue of the sorely beleaguered company in Dead Man's Gulch, we must precede him for awhile to that terrible spot, where one of the most dreadful tragedies of the many there enacted was going on.

The party, numbering over thirty, two-thirds of whom were hardened, bronzed hunters, had been driven tumultuously into the place by the sudden appearance of the notorious Swico-Cheque and his band, where they had barely time to throw their men and horses into the roughest attitude of defense, when they were called upon to fight the screeching Comanches, in one of the most murderous and desperate hand-to-hand encounters in which they had ever been engaged.

Our readers have already learned, from the hurried words of Gibbons, something of the experience of the beleaguered whites during the two days and nights immediately following their capture, and preceding his own departure, and it is not our purpose to weary them and harrow their feelings by a recital of the horrible incidents of that stubborn fight.

When Jim Gibbons, hugging the neck of his mustang, dashed at full speed through the lines of the Comanches, he left behind him ten able-bodied men, or more properly, ten who were still able to load, aim and fire their rifles. More than that number lay scattered around among the wagons, on the ground, in every position, killed by the bullets of the wonderful red riders and riflemen.

The wagons, as is the practice at such times, had been run together into an irregular circle, one being placed in the center (as the safest spot), into which the women and children were tumbled, and where, for the time, they were safe from the bullets that were rattling like sleet around them, and striking down their brave defenders upon every hand.

This done, the men devoted themselves to keeping back the swarming devils, that made a perfect realization of pandemonium as they circled about the doomed band.

In what way Dead Man's Gulch gained its name no one can tell with any certainty, but most probably from the number of massacres and deaths that had taken place within its horrid precincts. It was simply a hollow, somewhat resembling the dried-up bed of a small lake, and instead of being properly a gulch, was more like a basin, so that to enter it from any direction, one was compelled to descend quite a slope.

The trail which the party were following led directly through the center of this place, it being by far the most feasible route, in spite of the ascent and descent, on account of the broken nature of the country both to the north and south.

Dead Man's Gulch, occupying an area of several acres, was strewn and covered with

bones, as if indeed it were the site of some ancient catacomb, that had been rent in twain by some convulsion of nature.

A slight examination would have shown that these bones were those of horses and human beings, telling in most eloquent language to the beleaguered whites that the fate which threatened them was that which had overtaken many a one before them.

Dead Man's Gulch indeed was a favorite point for the Comanches, who were always roving the prairies in search of such bands as these, and it was consequently well known and dreaded by all who were compelled to make the journey; and the scene to which we now direct the attention of the reader was, as we have shown, but a repetition of what had been enacted there time and again without number.

The first day's fight was especially destructive upon the horses, it being found almost impossible to shelter them from the aim of the Comanches. As a consequence, the second morning found but few of these indispensable requisites in a journey of this kind. Those that had escaped, however, were secured and sheltered in such a way as to keep them from the other bullets that endeavored to seek them out.

Captain Shields, a sturdy borderer, and a man who had crossed the plains a score of times, suspected from the first that the only possible hope for his company was for some one to get through the Comanche lines to Fort Adams, and that was the reason why he so carefully protected the two or three remaining mustangs from death.

This, as a matter of course, was the last desperate resort, and was only to be attempted when it was absolutely certain that nothing else could avail.

His first hope was that by a determined and deadly resistance he could convince the red-skins that it would not pay to keep up the contest, for the warlike Comanches have the reputation of possessing discretion as well as bravery; but, in the present case, they were so carefully protected that they had the game in their own hands, and, despite the murderous replies of the whites, they refused to be driven away, and kept up a dropping fire, circling round and round the hills above, and preventing any attempts of the whites to move out.

For some time Captain Shields and his men fired from behind their horses and wagons, but they soon improved on this, and taking their positions in the wagons themselves, found that they were quite well able to resist the assaults of the red-skins, and tolerably well protected from the return fire, the red-skins being compelled to fire more at random.

And lying in this posture, they were compelled to see the remaining horses shot down, excepting the single one upon which Jim Gibbons made his escape.

And thus the fight—of itself one of the most bitter and sanguinary among the thousand and one of the West—ragged, and as it were, in a lull, there was exhibited some of the most daring performances upon both sides, and among them all was no loftier nor higher-souled courage than that of our heroine—the young and beautiful Lizzie Manning of Santa Fe.

CHAPTER V.

THE PARTY OF RESCUE.

THE SUN was past the meridian, when the hundred men, under the command of Lightning Jo, left Fort Adams and struck off in almost due southerly direction.

It required sharp riding to reach Dead Man's Gulch by nightfall; but all had strong hopes of doing so, as it was summer-time, and a goodly number of hours yet remained at their command, while their mustangs were toughened and fleet, and they were now put to the full test of their endurance.

Lightning Jo knew very well the location of the fatal gulch, and although he did not say as much, yet he had very little hope of reaching it in time to be of any earthly use to the poor wretches cramped up there and fighting so desperately for life.

Swico could not fail to know the meaning of the flight of Gibbons through his lines. He must know that he was making all haste to Fort Adams for succor, and that, if he did not speedily complete the awful business he had taken in hand, without much longer delay, the chances were that he would be disputed and compelled to fight a third party.

The prairie continued quite level, with dry grass that did not prevent a cloud of dust arising from the hoofs of the horses. The plain was broken here and there by ridges and hills, some of the latter of considerable elevation. Between these the rescuing parties were compelled frequently to pass, some of them being so close together that the thought of an ambushade was instantly suggested to the mind of every one.

But Jo was not the man to get it blind into a contrivance that the red-skins might set to entrap him, and his practiced eye made certain that all was right before he exposed his brave men to such danger.

He was rather expecting some flank movement upon the part of his old enemy, but he was disposed to believe that, whatever plan he adopted, he would not "try it on" until the whites reached the vicinity of Dead Man's Gulch.

"Mebbe he's got things fixed to tumble us in there too," he thought to himself; "and mebbe if he has, he'll find his flint will misfire."

The company galloped steadily forward until something like three-fourths of the distance was passed, and the sun was low in the west. They were riding along at the same rattling pace, all on the alert for signs of their enemies, and they were just "rising" a swell of moderate elevation, flanked on both sides by still higher hills, when the peremptory voice of Lightning Jo was heard, ordering a halt.

The command was obeyed with extraordinary precision, and every man knew as if by instinct that trouble was at hand. Naturally enough their eyes were turned toward the hills, as if expecting to see a band of Comanches swarming down upon them, and in imagination they heard the blood-curdling yells, as they poured tumultuously over the elevations, exulting in the work of death at their hands.

But all was still, nor could they detect any thing to warrant fear, although the manner of Lightning Jo indicated clearly that such was the case.

He did not keep them long in suspense.

"Some of the Comanches are there," remarked Lightning Jo, in his offhand manner; "whether old Swico himself is among 'em or not, I can't say till I go forward and find out. Keep your guns and pistols ready, for there may be a thousand of 'em down on ye afore ye know it."

And with this parting salutation, or rather warning, the scout started his horse on a gallop straight toward the rise, as though he purposed to ride directly between the hills already mentioned. But seemingly on the very point of entering, he turned his mustang sharply to one side, and instead of passing between, circled around the hill upon his right.

All this time he sat as erect and proud in his saddle as though he were approaching the stockade of the fort, which he had made his head-quarters for so many years.

The cavalrymen, as a matter of course, scrutinized his movements with the intensest interest.

"How easy for a stray shot to tumble him out of his saddle!" was the reflection of nearly every one watching the daring soldier.

This action of Lightning Jo speedily carried him over a portion of the ridge, and out of sight of the horsemen, who could only surmise what was going on beyond.

But the sharp, pistol-like crack of a rifle, within five minutes of the time he had vanished from view, proved that the fears of Lightning Jo were well founded, and that the drama had already opened in dead earnest.

Indeed it had. The scout had detected all-convinced signs of the presence of his old enemies upon the hill, and the simple artifice of turning aside, at the last moment, had given him the advantage of flanking his foes, and coming upon them from altogether an unexpected quarter.

As he passed over the ridge, Jo saw about twenty Comanche Indians sitting quietly upon their horses, and in a position that indicated that they were composedly expecting the appearance of their prey from another quarter. Instead of turning to flee, the scout saluted them in his customary manner by bringing up his rifle, and boring a hole through the skull of one of the astonished red-skins, before the rest really suspected what was going on.

"Tahoo—oo!" called out Jo, as he witnessed the success of his shot, and he followed it up with another yell that was peculiarly his own, and which was so impossible of imitation that he was known by it from Arizona to Mexico.

The Comanches were not men of wood to sit still upon their animals, and remain targets for one of the most skillful riflemen living.

Identifying their assailant by means of his yell, they instantly scattered, as if a bombshell had landed among them, and they scampered down the other side of an adjoining hill, and out of sight of Jo, carrying their fallen comrade with them.

This, it would seem, ought to have satisfied the scout, but it did not. He suspected that a larger party of Indians was in the neighborhood, and determined to make sure before returning to his men.

The actions of the Comanches seemed to indicate that they were about making an attempt to surround him, and he made ready to guard against it.

"Let 'em surround me! I feel wolfish to-day, and I think it'll do me good to let off some of my extra steam among 'em."

He gazed furtively over his shoulder, nevertheless, for he had no wish to be taken off his guard, in such a desperate encounter as this was certain to prove, in case a collision occurred.

His mustang stepped very carefully, with his head raised and his ears pricked, for he fully felt the delicacy of the situation, and knew that at any moment they were liable to be enveloped by a horde of their enemies.

The sagacity of the horse was the first to give notice of the approach of danger. He was stepping stealthily along, his senses on the alert, when he suddenly paused, with a slight whinny.

At the same instant, Lightning Jo caught a peculiar sound, as if made by the grating of a horse's hoof upon the gravel, and he turned his head with the quickness of lightning.

There they were, sure enough!
(To be continued.)

Tracked to Death: OR, THE LAST SHOT.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID,
AUTHOR OF "HELL-SEEK HAND," "LOVE RANCHER,"
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII. A CHANGE OF COSTUME.

AFTER performing their ablutions in the creek, the prairie pirates entered the tents, therein to finish their toilet.

They soon re-appeared, one after another, in a complete change of costume; no two alike. Some wore the backwoods hunting-shirt of buck-skin, with fringed cap and skirt, leggins to correspond. Others were garbed as Mexican rancheros in velvet jacket, calzonerias, serape, and waist-scarf. Still others were dressed in the sky-blue cottonade blouse and pantaloons of the Louisiana creole; while some, of less taste exterior, had coats of the homespun copper-as-dyed cloth of Tennessee, or the gray-blue "jeans" of Kentucky.

Their head wear exhibited a like fanciful variety; caps and hats of all sorts and shapes; the former of coon-skin, cat-skin, and cloth; the latter of felt, wool, palm, panama, and beaver—among them the black-glaze, broad brim of Mexico.

Borlasse reappeared in his rough blanket coat, belted and booted as when seen in the streets of Natchitoches.

Conceit of personal appearance was not among the weaknesses of the Texan robber chief, who, in this respect, had no affinity with either of his Italian prototypes, Fra Diavolo or Mazzaroni. But, if not so polite or fashionably picturesque, the Transatlantic bandit was quite as formidable as they, and could stop a traveler and cut his throat as effectively as either.

With their change of garb the prairie pirates also made some change in their mode of armament. Their guns, pistols, and knives were retained; while the spears, tomahawks and bows were abandoned. These, collected into a heap, with the cast Indian disguises and other insignia of the savage, were carried into a cavern in the cliff close by, and there secreted with due care. As Borlasse said, they might be wanted again. The transformation scene ended, the robbers now turned their attention to things culinary.

During a whole night and day they had been sustaining themselves on drink, of which they had a plentiful supply—the pro-

ceeds of a former raid down the Colorado. They had brought nothing away from Dupre's wine-bins, the barrels of silver being load sufficient.

The appetite of hunger was now keen upon them, and they had the wherewith to satisfy it. There were skilled hunters among them, and several haunches of venison, with a bear's ham or two, were seen hanging from the branches of the pecan trees, beyond reach of hawk or coyote.

Some of the band, accustomed to act as caterers and cooks, had already commenced preparing these for the spit; and the choicest pieces were soon frizzling in the blaze of a huge hickory fire.

For their culinary operations they found a valuable helpmate in their yellow-skinned captive. Jupiter, like all of his race, knew something of the science of gastronomy, being especially skilled in barbecuing. He seemed so zealous in his new vocation, and altogether so contented with his captivity, that his captors soon ceased to look upon him as a prisoner, and began to regard him as an associate. He had told them of his being Clancy's slave; hinted at harsh treatment; showed them a scarred back to prove it; and professed himself highly pleased at the circumstance that had separated him from his master. In short, Jupiter announced his readiness to become a member of the freebooting fraternity—a useful, obsequious servant, if that should be the conditions required of him. Accepted as such, he entered upon his duties *en amore*, and with an alacrity that delighted them.

They did not think of questioning his professions of fidelity. An escaped slave, there was nothing strange in such conversion. Dinner, drinking and smoking occupied their time, until the sun sunk behind the crest of the cliffs, and the crepuscular light, stealing over the valley, empurpled the foliage of the pecan-trees.

While giving way to sensuous indulgence—in short, getting drunk—there was one among their number who kept sober.

Borlasse—big, lumbering brute as he was—was, nevertheless, gifted with a fair share of common sense, along with any quantity of low cunning. A rude strategist in his way, he had brain to conceive and courage to carry out his conceptions. Otherwise he could not have been the acknowledged leader of twenty Texan frontiersmen, all of them, as himself, outlaws, and most having hands that had been imbrued in blood.

Ever since recrossing the San Saba he had felt ill at ease. What had become of Quantrell, and the other man with the captive girls? He thought less of it then; supposing he would find them at the rendezvous. But they were not there, and where could they have gone?

For a time he was disposed to think Quantrell himself might be a traitor. Had he, too, discovered that Clancy was still alive; and, no longer in fear of the law, determined to separate himself from the band—an association with which he had become leagued through sheer necessity, in the hour of dread desperation?

Had Quantrell encountered Clancy during the night, and been killed by him?

Certainly the two men could not have met and again parted without one killing the other. Borlasse was sufficiently *au fait* to their feud to feel sure of this.

But if Richard Darke were now dead, Clancy would have gone off with the captives. He would not have been found carelessly straying, hunting, as he himself said, when surrounded and taken prisoner.

Jim Borlasse now regretted not having put his prisoner to torture, and forced him to a fuller confession. He reproached himself for not having done so. And while his men were carelessly carousing, he was striding among the tents; now and again looking anxiously along the path that led toward the gorge, all the time muttering words of dissatisfaction, commingled with curses.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

A DISOBEDIENT HAND.

FOR over an hour the captain of the freebooters strode through the encampment like a tiger in its cage. Ever and anon he stood upon its edge, gazing into the darkness, and listening for the sound of hoofs.

The impatience under which he chafed was of no common kind. For, brute though he was, both in body and soul, without one iota of sentiment, he yet *loved*. True, it was animal passion, animal passion of the lowest kind. But it was also of the strongest; at the moment so overpowering him, that he would have willingly surrendered his share of the silver taken from Louis Dupre to have possessed himself of Dupre's sweetheart.

And to reflect that he had been in possession of and let her so easily escape! For he now began to think that this would be the upshot.

While thus chafing, a thought came to his relief. Clancy might still be alive? What if he, Borlasse, should go back to the place where he had buried him, promise to release him on the condition of his telling whether he had encountered Darke; at the same time threaten torture and death if he should refuse to confess the truth. It would be a ten-mile ride; but what of that? He could not sleep without having satisfaction of some kind. He must know whether Darke was still true or a traitor.

He had almost determined on this course when another thought occurred to him—something preliminary. He would first confess the mulatto, and, if need be, put him to torture.

Strange he had not thought of this before!

It was not too late; and, gliding among the tents, he looked for the man of mixed blood.

He found him in company with another *sang-mélee* of very different mixture—the half-Spaniard, half-Indian, Fernand. The two were hobnobbing over a calabash of corn whiskey, fraternizing as if they had been born brothers.

Borlasse, separating them, drew the mulatto aside, and, when beyond ear-shot of his comrade, put him to confession.

He opened the dialogue in a friendly tone, and with coaxing confidence.

The man confessed he knew nothing of any Phil Quantrell, and no more of a Richard Darke. He never heard of either. He was Mass' Clancy's slave, who had lately bought him. Mass' Clancy had just come to Texas to join the colony of Colonel Armstrong. He had been attending on his young master, out for a hunt—that was all. Jupiter's tale was plausible enough. It had been suggested by a caution Clancy had hastily communicated, just before the two were taken.

The mulatto was a man of no ordinary mind. It had been his misfortune to be born a slave, and it was his superior intellect, chafing at the ignoble lot, that had made him a fugitive. The exercise of this intellect had already enabled him to mislead the prairie pirates, making them believe he was contented to remain with them as their *chef de cuisine*.

While ostensibly engrossed with his new duties, he had been eagerly listening to their conversation. From it he had gathered enough to give him an idea of what they had done to his fellow-prisoner; and he was not without hope of being able to escape from the robbers' camp in time to release him.

Thus hoping, he stuck to his simple story, a Colt's revolver held to his head, its cold steel touching his tawny skin.

The test satisfied Borlisse, who gave over confessing him.

The sun was now down, the moon up; but no Phil Quantrell—no captives!

The chief of the prairie pirates, at first only impatient at being so long kept from having white arms around him, was becoming anxious and alarmed.

Calling his associates from their cups, he communicated his apprehensions, and proposed that a party should go back over the plain in search of their missing comrades.

But the robbers were now too far gone in drink. Their chief no longer commanded them. They did not care either for Phil Quantrell, or the captives committed to his charge. And as to the danger of their being pursued by the scurvy colonists, why, let them pursue if they chose. There was not the slightest likelihood of such green-horns being able to track them across the upper plain. Besides, they wouldn't dare venture so far, believing them to be Indians. Bah! They were safe enough; they were enjoying themselves. Let Phil Quantrell and the girls go to the deuce!

With these and other like speeches was Borlisse's proposal met. Drink had made his men mutinous and disregardful of their duty, as of him.

He grew angry, roared like an infuriated bear, and threatened to quarrel with them. But they were all against him, and he saw it was no use attempting extreme measures.

In the morning, they said, they would assist him in the search, go anywhere he wished—but that night they must make merry and drink—drink!

Borlisse had to yield.

To drown his chagrin he joined them in their revelry, and drank deeply as any.

The debauch ended by one and all becoming thoroughly intoxicated, each staggering as he best could to a place of repose.

Some found their way inside the tents; others dropped down where they were, falling asleep *sub Jove*, or under the shadow of the pecans.

CHAPTER XC.

A BRACE OF HALF-BREEDS.

As the roystering robbers, one after another, succumbed to the strong drink and rolled over asleep, so one after another the lights of the encampment became wasted and went out. One only continued burning; this inside a small tent, standing some distance apart from the rest.

Two men were its occupants, both still awake and yet carousing. They were both men of mixed blood, though of races quite different. The one was half-Saxon, half-African; the other was in like proportions Spaniard and Indian. They were the mulatto Jupiter and the mestizo Fernand.

They had been a long time over their cups, and to all appearance both had drunk deeply, since they talked and acted as if far advanced toward a state of intoxication. For all this, they were still quite sober, both of them, each believing the other to be drunk.

Though thus mutually mistaken about one another's condition, each knew why he was not himself intoxicated. The grass forming a litter over the tent floor could have told why. It had been dry at the commencement of their carousal; but now, at a late hour, after the prairie pirates had gone to rest, it was saturated in a spot between the feet of both, where glass after glass of strong liquor had been spilt, not accidentally, but with design, and surreptitiously, the men who thus poured it out concealing the act from one another.

In the mutual deception each had his object. That of the mulatto was to get the mestizo drunk, in order that he might himself take his departure, for purposes already known; while the latter, having suspicion of this design, was keeping sober to thwart it.

As the time passed on, and drink after drink appeared to be swallowed, Jupiter began to despair. He had never met with a man who could stand so much liquor without showing it as he with whom he had been so long hobnobbing.

What could it mean?

Was the mestizo's stomach coated with steel, and his head lined with iron?

Perhaps his drinking companion would be making the same inquiry about him? And he might also have been doing the same!

As soon as this suspicion crossed the mind of the mulatto he determined to watch the movements of the mestizo.

He was not long before discovering a clue to the mystery, and why his *convite* was keeping sober as himself.

With eyes turned toward the entrance of the tent, but twisted askant, he saw the latter stealthily spilling his liquor.

The action was significant. There could be no doubt that he himself was being watched and guarded.

But the moment before he had believed himself sure of escape. Drunkenness had disembarrassed him of the others. But here was one taking care not to get drunk; still wakeful as a wolf or watch-dog!

How was he to get rid of this vigilant sentinel?

There was a way—only one. At least, there seemed but one. The eyes of the fugitive slave sparkled with a strange light as he thought of it. It was the lurid gleam that speaks of an intention to kill.

It came after reflection, but quick, telling him he must either kill or lose all he was trying to gain; perhaps he himself killed.

Almost as quick was the action that followed. Detecting his drinking companion as he poured out the liquor, he stooped toward him with a laugh, inquiring why he was practicing the trick.

As the interrogatory entered the mestizo's ear the blade of a bowie-knife went through his heart, and he fell dead upon the floor of the tent, without uttering even a groan.

The robbers remained buried in slumber, wholly unconscious of the tragical incident that had taken place so near them.

Amid their snores and loud, stertorous breathing, the mulatto glided gently and silently out from among the tents, and as silently made his way to the inclosure where the horses were kept.

Pronouncing some words in an undertone, one of the animals, separating from the rest, came up, allowing him to take hold of its forelock. It was the horse that belonged to Charles Clancy, which the robbers had taken from him.

Jupiter had not caught the horse without a purpose. Over his left arm he carried a saddle and bridle. The saddle was soon upon the animal's back, and the bridle bit between its teeth.

The corral was inclosed by the usual zig-zag fence of roughly-split rails, its entrance being a set of bars. To the old Mississippian slave these were familiar things, and he understood their manipulation.

The bars were gently let down, and as gently was the horse led through the opening.

There was no disturbance—no noise of any kind—not even when the fugitive, with a knife he had surreptitiously taken from one of the tents, cut the string that tied Clancy's hind to a tree, and set the animal free. The dog, like himself, seemed instinctively to know there was a necessity for silence.

And while the drunken robbers lay slumbering and snoring, the mulatto rode off from their midst, with a gun upon his shoulder, a pistol in his belt, a bowie-knife hanging against his hip, and a hound following at his horse's heels.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 97.)

We shall soon commence, in these columns, a story of unexampled interest, and originality, by Frederick Whitaker, who is now so great a favorite. It is called "DOUBLE DEATH, OR, THE SEX QUEEN OF WYOMING; A ROMANCE OF THE REVOLUTION," which, in many respects, must be regarded as one of the finest literary performances since the days of Cooper's celebrated "Spy."

HAWKEYE HARRY, THE Young Trapper Ranger: OR, THE MYSTERY OF THE WOOD.

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY SPY," "BOY CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

BEARING THE LION.

NIGHT passed away and the sun of another day dawned upon the village of Black Buffalo. Still the cunning Sioux knew naught of the foe that was envying their town, for all they were vigilant and scouts were constantly on the move.

Close to the edge of the stream, that divided the wooded bluffs and great prairie, stood the lodge of Black Buffalo. Upon the south side of the stream was a steep, precipitous bank that guarded well the approach from that direction. In a semicircle around the chief's lodge, touching the stream above and below, the wigwams of the tribe were built with no little precision.

The chief's lodge was well guarded and he had no fear of danger, for a foe could not approach from the south, nor could he pass the line of *wick-e-ups* without being seen.

At an early hour on the morning in question, five men took their departure from the Indian town. They were Henri Roche and his men, starting back for the contents of the chest they had buried upon the banks of the Boyer.

The chief found himself alone in his lodge soon after the departure of the outlaws. The execution of the young male captive, Richard Parker, was to be postponed until Roche's return, consequently quiet and inactivity prevailed. The warriors lounged idly about their wigwams and slept in the warm sun. Only their squaws were busy, bringing water and fuel and dressing game of the previous day's chase.

But where was Nora Gardette? where was Gerlie, the captive child of the old trapper? and where the child of Cloude-Heart?

Ah! see yonder! Out from a neat-looking little lodge floats a being fair as the sun ever shines upon. Her skin is white, but her movements and manners and gaudy, flashing ornaments and clothing, were those of an Indian. But seven years could change the habits of a child into those of an Indian princess. It must be Gerlie, the child of Old Optic.

The young princess crossed the opening between the wigwams and the lodge of the chief, and approached the latter structure. At the door she was met by Black Buffalo.

"What does my white daughter want?" he asked. "I see that her face wears a cloud which tells me her heart is sad."

"My heart has always been sad, Black Buffalo," she said. "Ever since I was taken from my poor papa and mamma, I have known no happiness. But I came to intercede for the life of the prisoner yonder, and she pointed toward young Parker's prison-lodge."

The chief's brow clouded and a grim smile swept over his face.

"Then you love the pale-face prisoner?" he said.

The princess hung her head and blushed scarlet. The chief noted her emotions and continued:

"The pale-face youth shall die. You are to be the wife of the chief, called Roche, when three suns more go down. Waugh!"

The last exclamation was occasioned by the unceremonious intrusion of a figure wrapped in a great blanket, into the sacred precincts of the chief's lodge.

Before the chief could utter a single word, the figure threw aside the blanket, and there, face to face with the great Black Buffalo, stood Hawkeye Harry, the ranger.

The brave youth had come to beard the lion in his den, and before the chief could recover sufficiently from his surprise, a revolver leveled full at his head, and a firm, decided and unflinching voice said:

"Utter one word, Black Buffalo, that can be heard outside of this lodge and you shall die!"

The chief fairly staggered backward before the deadly fire of the youth's eyes. His great spirit was quelled by the deadly weapon pointed at his breast, by a hand he knew was never failing.

"What does the pale-face—" the chief began in a low tone, but permitting his voice to grow higher with each word—"want here? Does he—"

"Stop!" demanded Harry, "not so loud! If by word or action you make my presence in this lodge known, I will shoot you dead!"

The chief was unarmed, and he saw that he was completely in the youth's power. It was over a hundred yards to the *wick-e-ups* of the warriors; the boy stood between him and the door of his own lodge, the flap of which was down; no sudden movement could defeat the youth's purpose, for his dark, gray eyes were fixed, with a steady, unwavering gaze upon his own black, scintillating orbs, and his finger was upon the trigger of the weapon.

"I come," the youth continued, after a moment's hesitation, "for all the captives in your hands."

"Ugh! I ain't got any," replied the chief, in English.

"You lie!" exclaimed the youth; "within the last two days you have brought two, a man and woman, to your den. I want them; also, a captive or two that you have had for years—one named Gerlie."

At this juncture a low cry burst from the lips of the Indian princess before him.

"Have you such a captive?" Harry continued.

"She stands before you," said the chief, "but she would rather stay with the red-men than go back to the pale-faces."

The youth glanced at the young princess and saw that she was not an Indian. His heart gave a joyous bound.

"Have you been a captive long, little princess?" he asked.

"Many years," she replied.

"Do you remember what your name is?"

"Oh, yes, sir! It was Gerlie—Gerlie Gray."

"And would you rather stay with these red-skins?"

"Not if I could go to my papa, or poor mamma."

"You can. Your father awaits you not far away."

"Oh, then I want to go to him! Poor papa, I almost forget how he looks!"

"Then you shall go to him, little princess."

The brow of the chief clouded, and there was a convulsive twitching of the facial muscles, and a heaving of the chest, that told of the terrible emotions of vengeance and fear that were struggling within him.

"I know, chief," continued Harry, "it is a great damper on one's pride and manhood to be caught in such a fix as this. I got into your lodge—walked right through your village wrapped in that blanket, which I took from one of your guards last night when I took his scalp. But, I have come for all the captives in your town, and unless I get them you'll have to die."

"Have only that many captives," said the chief holding up three fingers.

"Is that so, princess?"

"There are only two captives besides myself," the maiden answered.

"Then I want them," said Hawkeye Harry.

"Black Buffalo will go bring them, then," said the chief, in a tone which our hero did not mistake.

"No, you must not leave this lodge. You might bring a pack of your warriors instead of the prisoners. No, no, chief, you can't catch me that way. Send this princess, and let her bring the captives here. She can tell the warriors that you sent for them. When they are here, then will I remove this revolver from its present dangerous position. Send the princess for the captives."

The face of the chief grew brighter, and Harry knew at once that he was meditating over some design to thwart his intentions.

"Go, pale rose, and bring the two captives here. Let their hands be bound at their backs. Tell the warriors that I sent you, and for none of them to come until I bid them."

"That'll do, chief," said the daring young ranger, although he fathomed the meaning of the last three words.

With face radiant with joy, the little princess turned and glided from the lodge.

In less than five minutes she returned, followed by Richard Parker and Nora Gardette. The latter was pale and sad, but when her eyes fell upon Harry, a cry of joy burst from her lips and a light of love beamed in her eyes.

The captives' hands were bound, but, by direction of Harry, they were untied by the princess.

"What is to become of us, anyhow, cousin Nora?" asked Dick Parker.

"Set at liberty," said Hawkeye Harry.

"Young man, take that rifle, tomahawk, and lance that stand behind the chief, and then, with the princess and Nora, cross the stream to the prairie on the footlog that spans it just south of this log. Go, and be quick!"

Grasping the weapons, Dick Parker, followed by the two maidens, left the lodge and proceeded toward the stream where it was spanned by an uprooted tree.

At this juncture, a savage yell was heard along the line of wigwams. The warriors had been watching the chief's lodge, their suspicions or curiosity being aroused by the princess leaving the two captives to the maidens, free and unguarded, moving toward the stream, something of the real truth of affairs flashed upon their minds, and seizing their weapons, they started, with a yell, toward the lodge.

Hawkeye Harry was startled by the yell, and the hellish gleam that was flashed from the eyes of the chief.

"The young pale-face has now got himself into a trap," the chief said, with a fiendish smile.

The youth, backed from the lodge; then, turning, fled after the three captives.

With a war-whoop that sounded unearthly, Black Buffalo shot from his lodge and called to his warriors.

The four whites hurried across the creek on the log, and by command of Hawkeye Harry, threw themselves upon the ground in the tall prairie grass.

The savages swarmed to the creek, and some of them had sprung upon the log to cross. But, at this juncture, fully three scores of forms arose from the grass on the opposite side of the stream, and poured a withering fire upon the savages. In dismay they recoiled, leaving a score of dead behind.

Then arose the war-cry of the Fox warriors under Red Wing, mingled with the triumphant shouts of the dragoons.

The Sioux fled beyond range of the enemy's rifles in the widest confusion. Owning to the precipitous light of the bank upon which they stood, our friends did not pursue the foe.

Hawkeye Harry and his three captive friends now hurried back to the rear, where a little group of three persons were standing, holding a number of horses. They were Old Optic, Calvin Gardette and Cloude-Heart.

Nora was clasped to her father's heart, and both wept tears of joy.

And Gerlie Gray, the Indian princess, knew her father, Willis Gray, alias Old Optic, after many years of sorrow and separation; and their meeting was an affecting one. Then, from Gerlie's lips, he listened to a long story of wrong and sorrow, in which Henri Roche was the chief actor.

It is unnecessary for us to repeat her story, for it proved a confirmation of the same story which Cloude-Heart told the old trapper, the night he came to the Cone.

After the first excitement of the meeting of fathers and daughters was over, Willis Gray, as we will henceforth know Old Optic, took Cloude-Heart aside, and said to him:

"Cloude-Heart, you have told me the truth. My darling wife, who I believed had deserted me for the love of another, was true to me! Gerlie confirms your story! Cecil, my wife, was decoyed from home—captured and carried away into captivity by Henri Roche, for revenge. She was kept a slave for several years, and finally made her escape, but where she is Gerlie does not know; and, Cloude-Heart, I shall never rest day or night until she is found. For the information you gave me that has led to the rescue of Gerlie, I thank you with all my heart, and am sorry that you did not find your child."

"I did find her, though, Willis Gray," replied the masked stranger.

"What?" exclaimed Willis Gray, "you found your child?"

"Yes, Gerlie Gray is my child!"

"Oh, God! then you are Cecil, my wronged wife!" cried Gray, starting toward Cloude-Heart.

The mask was thrown aside, and once again, after long years of heart-suffering, Willis Gray looked upon the face of Cecil Gray, his wife!

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

Two days following the events just recorded, a casual observer might have seen a number of buzzards hovering over the forest, not far from the valley in which was the encampment of Red Wing. The filthy birds showed great anxiety in their movements, for now they settled down, down, as though ready to attack their quarry; then they would start up again with shrieks, and poise themselves high above the tree-tops upon airy wing, and with naked, coral necks outstretched, watch below. But what were they watching? Was it a wounded deer, or wolf?

No, it was a party of men. But why should the birds be watching them? Did their instinct tell them of the tragic scene that was about to be enacted there within the silent wood—a scene that would result in a banquet to them?

Let us see.

The party stood in a little opening, and in a circle around five other men who were bound hand and foot.

The prisoners—for such the bound men were—were Henri Roche and four of his men. Their captors were the dragoons, Hawkeye Harry, Richard Parker, and others. And the scene that was now about to be enacted was the execution of the robbers. A rope was around each one's neck, which told the manner by which they were to meet their end.

When Roche saw that the hand of justice had him within its iron grasp, from which there was no escape, his courage gave way, and in hopes of mercy, he divulged many dark secrets.

He confessed his crimes in the separation of Willis Gray and his wife, the abduction of Nora Gardette, and that he was Rat Rongie, the robber chief.

His object in abducting Nora was to exact a princely ransom for her restoration to her father, whom he knew to be a wealthy man.

But all his schemes of wickedness had failed, and he met his just rewards, along with his associates, there in the forest.

The execution is over. Henri Roche is no more. The party moves on, and those foul birds overhead settle down without fear. But they start up again, and soar away with apparent disappointment. They found no quarry in the woods, for the bodies of the dead had been interred by their executors.

Upon the banks of the Boyer River, where Henri Roche had buried his chest, the dragoons went into camp on their return from the Sioux town. Here they concluded to remain a couple of days to rest their overworked animals before continuing their return to the fort.

Those two days were eventful ones in the life of Hawkeye Harry and Nora Gardette. They walked along by the river, and talked of the hour so near at hand when they must part. They recounted their adventures together—spoke of their first meeting in the mottle on the prairie, and the many trying dangers that followed their flight from the outlaws' camp. At last they spoke of the future. This led to the subject nearest each one's heart—love. With heaving breast and tremulous lips, Hawkeye Harry breathed forth the love that had been awakened.

And was his love reciprocated? How could it have been otherwise?

Ere they returned to camp, the young ranger had imprinted the first seal of love upon Nora's lips.

Where now were Richard Parker's hopes of the future? We answer: they were centered upon Gerlie Gray.

In the mean time, Willis and Cecil Gray had wandered forth into the woods, to talk over bygone days, and recount their trials and troubles. It was on the evening of their second day's sojourn by the Boyer, and they were some distance from the camp, when Gray came to a sudden halt, as he caught sight of a thin column of blue smoke rising above the tree-tops a short distance before him.

"What is it, Willis?" asked his wife.

"Smoke. There must be a camp-fire out there, and it may be that of an enemy."

"No, it is not," replied his wife, with a smile. "You know, Willis, I told you I lived with brother Tom, after my escape from the Indians. I first met him in the woods near here. He was an object of demerit like myself. His family had all been murdered in the Spirit Lake massacre, and he was hunting the foe to wreak vengeance upon them. His home now is in a cavern under the ground, from whence that smoke is rising yonder. I have lived with him just six months. It was he who first discovered that Old Optic was Willis Gray. But, come, and I will show you the cave."

She led the way down to the edge of a little creek, and then, pointing to the opposite side, said:

"The cavern is directly under that bank, and extends out under the bed of the stream. That large basswood tree standing over yonder is hollow, with an opening far up among the branches. The hollow of the tree is open to the ground, and so connected with the cavern as to serve in an excellent manner as a chimney. It has puzzled a great many who saw the smoke, but could not tell from whence it came, and Hawkeye Harry is one of them."

"Yes; I remember now; he told me something of it a few evenings ago," said Gray; "but, where is the entrance to the cavern?"

"There are two entrances. One is concealed by a large flat stone overgrown with moss. The other, and the one brother and I mostly used, is under the bed of this creek!"

"What! you are jesting, Cecil?" said Willis Gray.

"I am not, Willis. Brother found that the cavern extended under the creek, and to make our situation doubly secure, he made an opening up through the center of the stream, which at that time was perfectly dry. He then fixed a frame with a kind of a trap-door over the opening, so that the water could pass over it, as it was on a level with the bed of the stream. When the door was down, and water in the creek, it washed sand and gravel over the trap, thus concealing its presence from view, and filling the crevices around the frame, so that no water could find its way through into the cavern. When we wished to go out, we pushed the trap upward, thereby turning the water from about the opening, and enabling us to make an exit, though we were always compelled to wrap a blanket or buffalo-skin around us to escape a thorough wetting, as much water found its way into the cavern when the door was up; the water, however, did not render the cave disagreeable, for it found its way out immediately, through a narrow passage opening into the creek at the foot of yon rapids. My object, Willis, in staying in the place was to be near you, and search for our child, whom I lost track of after leaving the tribe, and of whom I never heard, until the day I worked the secret from Henri Roche, by pretending I was dying; and Cecil Gray laughed at the remembrance of that meeting with the outlaw."

At this juncture a low exclamation burst from Gray's lips, as he fixed his eyes upon the bed of the creek before him.

He saw something thrust upward in the water, revealing a small cavity, through which a dark, hairy form suddenly appeared.

"'Tis brother!" cried Cecil. "Tom! Tom!"

The form leaped from the opening, threw aside its hairy robe, and the next instant Willis Gray grasped his brother-in-law, a tall, sad-looking man, by the hand.

When Cecil and her husband returned to camp on the Boyer, her brother went with them, with the determination of leaving the country forever.

Hawkeye Harry now received an explanation of the mystery of the smoke ascending from the basswood tree, and the hairy form he saw rise from the bed of the creek and slay the Indian, and Tom was indeed the "Unknown." The young ranger was not a little surprised when he learned, also, that the occupants of the cave knew of his presence by the creek that night.

But with this mystery we are done.

The party resumed their journey to the fort, and reached the point in due season and in safety.

And now came the "tug of war"—the parting of friends and lovers. But, with the renewal of pledges and love vows, in tears and entreaties, the separation took place.

Calvin Gardette and his daughter, Willis and Cecil Gray and their daughter, all departed for the East, as also did Richard Parker.

Hawkeye Harry remained at the fort, but it was only for a short time. A year later found him in one of the leading eastern schools, and still a few years later he went to the home of Nora Gardette, and claimed a fulfillment of their vows made years ago upon the banks of the Boyer river.

With his young wife, Harry Houston went West, where he laid the foundation of wealth, prominence, and the best of all, a joyous and happy life.

Richard Parker married Gerlie Gray, and theirs was a life as bright and full of sunshine, as the life of Gerlie's parents had been dark and clouded.

THE END.

IN DEATH NOTCH, THE YOUNG SCALP-HUNTER—by Oll Coomes, author of "The Boy Spy" and "Hawkeye Harry"—the readers of the SATURDAY JOURNAL have another of this admirable author's admirable creations. Its early appearance in our columns will greatly enhance the interest now created in this writer, whose exclusive engagement on this paper is a matter of congratulation to us as well as to our vast audience of eager readers.

How the Turks Work. The methods of labor are peculiar. The Turk will invariably sit at his occupation, if possible. The trader, in his little store, all exposed to the street, may thus be seen, cross-legged, tailor-like, drawing in the smoke of his marghile, through its long, flexible tube, seemingly lost to all sublunary affairs, and indifferent whether customers come or go. If a mechanic, he always sits, if possible, and I thus see them, pressing the block of wood which they are fashioning between the soles of their feet. The blacksmith, in his little seven-by-nine shop, digs a hole to stand in, bringing thus the anvil nearer his arms. If a log of timber, forty or fifty feet in length, is to be converted into planks, it is first raised by main force on wooden horses six or seven feet, and then one man above and another below pull the saw—requiring a good day's work for the two to do what a Maine saw-mill would accomplish in five or ten minutes. And so through all the walks of life. The ancient scribe is also a Turkish institution. You find him cross-legged in his shop, with writing materials before him, ready to write a letter for you, draw an instrument, or sell you the materials for yourself. Perhaps yonder self-satisfied Turk, entering the mosque, for his devotions, at the fast of Ramazan, forms not a bad counterpart to the Pharisee, and so we have the Scribes and Pharisees together.

✍ Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

ON LEAVING HOME.

BY EDWD. JAMISON.

Leaving the home which so long hath befriended,
Stopping out boldly to meet life's stern tasks,
Sully the heart leane, that soon will be ended,
Ties the fond spirit unceasingly asks.
Asks for the hours, that shall live in remembrance,
Shining more splendid, when age shall decay,
Filling the soul with a beautiful semblance,
Spotless as yet, from life's cumbering away.

Pines the sad song for the days that have perished,
Longingly clings where its childhood was passed;
Brightly in memory's chambers are cherished,
Where sped Youth's May time, unconsciously past.
Bleak seems the world, as these memories brighten;
Darkling the future conceals its rough path,
Save, where occasional glimpses may lighten,
Only to show us the pitfalls it hath.

Over my senses a halo is stealing,
Pictured more strongly, the homestead appears;
Memory, elusive, no longer concealing,
Shows in full radiance my infantine years.
Rapt is the vision, I may not unfold it;
Closely 'twill cling to my footsteps through life,
Evermore dear to my heart will I hold it,
Furthest of visions, unsolved by earth's strife.

A Summer Romance.

BY JENNIE D. BURTON.

A RUSTLE of trailing silken robes, a waft of delicate fragrance, a vision of a fair, proud face and stately form. Ione passed the window where Vesey was lounging, while Earle, with his back to the light, was critically studying one of Claude's landscapes. He turned, but too late to catch any thing but the shadow.

"Who was that?" he asked.
"Miss Dalmere."
"Beautiful Ione?"

"Yes. Who would have thought she could ever have reached such perfection? I can scarcely believe she is the same unfledged girl I knew five years ago."

"You amaze me! I can no longer imagine Miss Dalmere as having been any thing but the personification of loveliness; I did not know that you had ever met before this season."

"Nevertheless I came very near marrying that bit of cool perfection, once upon a time."

Earle's eyes widened, and he twirled a pencil in his fingers rather nervously.

"What prevented?" he asked.
"My own disinclination," returned Vesey, calmly.

"Fact?"

"Fact. I'm quite willing to confess to my folly, though I'm ashamed of it. You see, I was a romantic youth of twenty-one; she just sixteen, tawny as a gipsy, overgrown and undeveloped."

"The match was arranged by an eccentric old uncle of mine, who claimed some remote degree of relationship with her also, and who had as great a propensity for match-making as any zealous stepmother. Ione was fond of me, and I must admit to talking a good deal of nonsense and putting my seal ring on her finger with an air of considerable impressment."

Ray Vesey stopped to turn the ring which was suspended by his watch chain, with no apparent intention of continuing his information.

"Well?" queried Earle, impatiently.

"Why don't you go on?"

"Beg pardon! I was studying whether or no to reveal what an incomparable niny I made of myself. The truth is, I fell a victim to the tender passion myself, and poured all the effervescent transports pertaining to the state of first love on the fairy feet of Miss Eustacie Loune—now Mrs. Osprey."

"Ray! what infatuation; Eustacie Osprey is fully ten years older than you; faded, shallow, heartless, a piece of affected vanity."

"This was five years ago, and old Osprey hadn't worried her into the haggard old woman she looks to be now. She hadn't outlived her bellethom then, and I was blind to any fault in her. *La belle Eustacie* smiled sweetly upon me and brought a small tempest down on my devoted head. First, my uncle called me to an account and gave me my choice to solemnly engage myself to Ione, or be disinherited. In my youthful candor and innocence I scorned the base allurement of his solid career of a million, and declined to be wrangled by such mercenary motives. I apostrophized the powers of faith and love, and very nearly got kicked out of his presence. Next was a scene with Ione, which ended with her flinging my ring at my feet, and sweeping from the room with the air of a scornful princess. I believe that was her first assumption of the dignity she wears so gracefully now."

"My uncle altered his will next day, leaving every thing to Ione, and the fair Eustacie married old Osprey within a fortnight. Little peace she's had with him, and little enjoyment of his riches, if rumor speaks truly. And—I've never spoken to Ione since that day we parted. Come along and present me, Earle; like as not she has forgotten my very existence before now."

But Earle dallied over a pencil sketch he was making on the leaf of his memorandum-book, with a single glance askance at Vesey.

"You'll be renewing the old compact soon enough, I daresay," he suggested.

Ray drummed upon the window-sill with his face turned in the shadow, but made no reply. His artist friend, with a gesture of impatience, tore the leaf with the unfinished sketch from his book, and crumpling it into a ball, sent it spinning across the floor. Ray possessed himself of it afterward, when he could do so unobserved, and found that the single figure in the foreground were the features of Ione.

There was the curve of a river which widened into a lake, and a strip of narrow beach where the figure stood, a little boat rocking at her feet. He had caught a glimpse of Ione that morning in this very position.

Just now the two young men linked arms and went out upon the piazza, at the further end of which she had seated herself on the broad, low step.

The proud head bent graciously, and the calm repose of the perfect face was stirred by a drift of radiance as she smiled when the presentation was made in due form, but neither by word or look did she show that Ray Vesey was connected in her mind with any circumstance of her remembered past.

It was a quiet inland resort, this little village where the two met after the lapse of years which stretched between them and the old intercourse.

Vesey had come here for a short respite after a season of hard brainwork; he was a litterateur from necessity as well as inclination,

and as yet had gained neither a great deal of fame nor much pecuniary profit through following the way which is seldom a path of roses to any author. He was awaiting the result of a work on which he hung his best hopes of future success, and had been somewhat restless under the strain of anxiety which made itself more apparent in this season of unwonted inactivity. But, after the advent of Miss Dalmere, he was oppressed by no sense of impatience at the delay. He would willingly have remained in suspense for a longer time than his publishers promised, for the sake of reveling undisturbed in the dream-land where he seemed to have been unconsciously wafted.

This was before the deepest feelings of his strong nature had been stirred. Before he had yielded himself utterly to the power of the girl whom he had once slighted, while the beauty she had developed pleased his eye, and met his appreciation of what was artistic in form, and color, and graceful movement.

A little later came the upheaving of deeper passion, and the agony of doubt.

For Earle, possessed of ample fortune, genial tastes, good address and handsome person, made no secret of his warm admiration for Miss Dalmere.

Earle painted a little for his own amusement, and with some real talent, managed to infuse the tint of life into all his pictures.

So now, when it was rumored that Ione had consented to sit to him, there was a little stir among the city people who had gathered down upon the shore of the pretty lake. That Earle should exert himself in a new undertaking on these breezy summer days, when all the out-door world seemed to woo one to lazy contentment, was in itself evidence sufficient of his thorough sincerity.

It was the contemplation of this picture, too, which woke Vesey to sudden comprehension of the shoals and narrows into which the barque of his hopes had drifted. If Ione remembered the relation in which they had once stood to each other, it must be to scorn the weakness which had possessed him. Now she held that quarter-of-a-million in her own right, while he ranked only as one of the countless throng that struggle constantly for the necessities and luxuries of life.

One day he came upon her all alone in a tangled, overgrown old garden, which had charmed him with its aspect of the wildly picturesque.

She had a taste for neutral colors, and her dress this day was of silver-gray silk, with simply a narrow black ribbon encircling her throat. She had broken a trailing length of vine, spangled with star-like blossoms of vivid scarlet, which added just the touch of bright color needed to make the picture perfect.

An impulse irresistible came over him to know if there was any chance of awakening in this vivid vision of womanly loveliness the depth of attachment which he knew had being with the unfledged girl of five years before.

"Do you remember how you stood under the drooping ivy vine in the old garden at my uncle's, the night when I put my ring on your hand, Ione? Seeing you here reminds me of that time, but we have both seen many changes since. Have you forgotten?"

"I never forget," she answered, quietly.

"Nor forgive?" it was on his lips to ask, while a throb of bitter pain wrenched his passion-struggling heart, but her warning glance checked him in time.

That very day Earle called him into the sky-lighted room he had fitted for a studio. He had just put the finishing touches to the portrait, and Ione's very self seemed to smile down at them from the canvas.

"Before the day is past, please Heaven, I shall ask her to be mine," said Earle, with more of tender reverence in his tone than Vesey had ever heard from him ere this.

"I was afraid once, Ray, that you might enter the lists against me, and I trembled; I should not have liked to break lanes with so formidable an opponent, but as it is, I am presumptuously hopeful."

So blind was he through all that he never suspected the sting his words inflicted.

And Ray Vesey, with the demon of unrest as it within him, rushed away from familiar sights and sounds to wait until the first throes of his agony should be past.

As the day wore away a sudden black cloud rushed across the zenith. He had not reckoned how the time was flying, and was startled to find how dark it had suddenly grown. It was scarcely more than mid-afternoon even yet, but the air was thick with a murky twilight.

He hastened to retrace his way, but long enough before the hotel was reached, the skies opened to let down the gathered floods in dense, driving sheets. Thunder pealed until the very earth rocked and quivered! Lightning flashed until all the heavens seemed one vast scroll of flame!

Such a violent, short-lived tempest seldom visits our temperate climate. Ray fought his way resolutely through it, and reached the house panting, exhausted.

There was a letter waiting for him—a letter from his publisher, announcing that his book was in type and proofs awaiting him. He set to work at once packing his effects, determined to leave on the first morning train, but, while he was still busy, there came a break in the storm, a gleam of the setting sun, and a timid knock at his door.

He opened to Miss Dalmere!

She was pallid as death and quivering with agitation.

"Mr. Earle went up the river to the little island where we picnicked yesterday," said she, hurriedly. He has not come back, and his boat has been swept down the current along with great piles of drift. The river is overflowing its banks, and they say the island will be quite submerged. Oh, Ray! what can be done? He will die there unless aid reaches him, for I have heard him say that he can not swim."

Her eyes, suffused with tears, were uplifted imploringly to his. He understood the dangerous position, and with a growing pallor, was resolute as steel.

"Don't fear," said he, quietly. "I will go to his rescue; I will save him, Ione."

And he did it in the face of a hundred dangers where there was one chance of safety for them both.

It was Earle who told how he had walked the bridge of insecure drift, which swayed and heaved beneath the venturesome feet—walked it far out into the swollen river to the swifter current which whirled the debris past with dangerous velocity, and here he battled with the stretch of rushing waters with almost superhuman strength.

Earle grew breathless with awe of the

vivid remembrance over the recital, and yet he knew nothing of the fiercer battle Vesey had waged with the temptation which assailed him to let his rival meet his fate—or how noble was the victory gained.

Ione comprehended it, though, but when she would have bestowed her meed of grateful praise, he was already gone from the place.

Two months later, when his book was a decided success, and his fame established, Vesey met Earle in a city club-room.

After commonplace remarks, the latter lowered his tone to say:

"I was presumptuous, Ray; Ione was very kind, but she never cared for me. It was a sore hurt at first, but I'll conquer it in time, I dare say."

The next train took Vesey speeding back to the lake shore, where Miss Dalmere still remained.

It was all well with him at last, although Ione said, with deprecating humility:

"Had you asked me that morning in the garden, Ray, I should have refused you. I never could quite root out the love of those old days, but the bitter resentment rankled too. It was not blotted out until I saw how nobly unselfish you had become when you risked your life to save Earle, whom you thought your rival."

"It was a double risk," he said, with a smile. "But I didn't dream that I had a chance left to gain you, my Ione."

Without Mercy:

OR,
THREADS OF PURE GOLD.

A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD," "LAURA'S PERIL," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

DESPAIR.

TRACY did not recognize his preserver at first; indeed, not until Rupert mentioned the fact that he was the heir of Holcombe Hall, and was well acquainted with the history of Tracy's expulsion therefrom, did he return the kindly pressure of the hand that Rupert had given him.

"But a poor fellow, has this thing settled upon your mind so heavy as this?" and he pointed at the river.

"Do you mean my uncle's displeasure?"

"Of course."

"Oh, no, sir; that set me back a bit, but I readily got over that, and was doing grandly, when this thing came to crush out hope and all desire to do, or live."

"What thing?" asked Rupert.

"My wife—my little Dora—was on the Atlantic."

"The ship that was lost off the Bahamas?" ejaculated Rupert.

"Yes, she perished in the wreck; went down among strangers, and found a grave far, far from home and me. Oh, sir! it must be very terrible to die in this way!"

"Yes, very terrible," repeated the young Spaniard; "but there were a number saved, were there not?"

"A boat's crew."

"May she not be among the rescued?"

The names have not been published yet."

"No, there is no hope of that. I have seen the persons who were saved; they came up on the Royal George; she is not among them."

He moaned as he said this; but he did not weep—he was beyond that; his grief was too intense, his despair too deep for tears.

Rupert saw this, and approaching him, said, kindly:

"Mr. Cuthbert, believe me I feel deeply for you, and would do all in my power to drive this sorrow from you. Can I aid you in any way?"

"No, sir," replied the Englishman, grasping him by the hand again; "my distress is beyond cure, but I'm much obliged for your offer just the same."

"But, do you need money?"

"No, no," interrupted Tracy; "I want only succor from my agony—something to drown all recollection of my loss, and that only death can afford. So good-by, sir, farewell!"

He made a rush for the river, and ere Rupert could prevent him, he had leaped into the stream.

Quick as thought the young Spaniard jumped into a yawl that, fortunately, was close at hand, and calling to an Italian who was guiding a canoe full of vegetables down the stream, to catch the man whom he saw struggling in the water under his very prow, he put all his strength on one stroke and was alongside the canoe in an instant.

The Italian sprang to obey, and succeeded in catching Tracy by the hair, but he could not hold on, and then Rupert made a similar attempt.

He was more successful, and, with the aid of the Italian, the would-be suicide was dragged into the yawl, and, by dint of a little rubbing, consciousness came back, but only for a moment, and then Rupert made the startling discovery that Tracy Cuthbert was a maniac.

Reason had fled, and in its place a horrible insanity reigned.

The first thought of Rupert was to have him conveyed to the asylum, but the next was more humane.

"I'll have him taken home to aunt Mont-lea's," he said; "it will afford Hester some gratification to be able to minister to his comfort."

Having determined on his course of action, he gave the Italian a dollar for his trouble, and told him to run up to the Algiers ferry landing and order a cab.

But the poor fellow did as directed, and in twenty minutes after Tracy was helped into the Mont-lea mansion, where every thing was done that could in anywise contribute to his comfort.

As Rupert had predicted, Hester was glad to minister to Tracy's comfort, and did so with such a hearty good will and sympathetic care, that Rupert was charmed more than ever.

It needed this duty, this severe discipline of the sick room, to bring out the depths of her womanly nature, and when a week had passed, and Tracy's reason and health had been restored sufficiently to enable him to appreciate all that his nurse had done for him, she felt repaid a thousand fold.

"Miss Corwin—Hester," he said, holding one of her hands in both of his, "we have been ill-starred, unfortunate, but we can console ourselves with the reflection that, whatever of pain and trouble has come to us, and others through us, we are free from any intention to err—we have indeed been actuated by the purest motives."

"Yes," she said, dropping her eyes.

"You have placed me under a debt of gratitude by your care of me, that, be sure I will endeavor to repay if ever the opportunity offers, but for the nonce I have nothing to give but my thanks."

She begged of him not to speak of repaying her. I'm sufficiently compensated in knowing that you have been brought back to reason, and that my best friend, Rupert Gaspard, was instrumental in saving you from a fearful fate."

He shuddered as he thought of that day of agony and despair, and then they talked of Rupert, and finally of Dora; then Hester said:

"I don't think she is dead, even yet; for somehow, ever since you told me of her first, I can see her flitting before me like a vision of light and beauty; and last night I dreamt of her."

His face lit up; a glow came into his cheeks, as he asked, oh, so fervently: "And what did you dream?"

"I dreamt that I saw the Argyl sailing in a sea as clear as crystal; the sky above was blue and cloudless, and the great ship looked like a snowy bird, which, with full-spread wings, skimmed the ocean with its snowy breast."

"Yes, yes. Well?"

"Well, after awhile the sun dropped into the sea, and then a storm—oh, such a storm! dark, dismal and dangerous—swept up from the south, and the ocean, as if in terror, blanched as white as chalk."

"For a while the storm was so thick that I could not see the ship, but when a flash of vivid lightning lit up the scene, nothing met my eye save two boats struggling with the elements."

"Two boats?" echoed Tracy, worked up into something akin to fervor by the girl's earnestness.

"Yes, two boats," repeated Hester, "and one of them drifted off in the darkness, but the other, which contained Dora, for I thought I knew her, followed a star that blazed far to the westward, and then a mist came between. When it cleared away, as it did presently, I saw her standing amid a group of seamen in the loveliest hands eyes ever beheld. Oh, it was so beautiful that it startled me, and I awoke."

"And what do you make out of this?" he asked, sadly.

"That she has been rescued, of course."

He shook his head negatively.

"Don't you think so?"

"No; I interpret it in a different way. That beautiful land is the Paradise beyond the grave; I can make nothing else out of it."

They discussed the matter for some time, and Hester, with a woman's persistency, at length convinced him that there was hope in her vision, and that, possibly, the enchanted island was more than an airy nothing, after all.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DREAD NIGHT.

FOR various reasons we are constrained to go back to the night on which the Argyl perished. It was a terrible night—a night of gloom, of wreck, of disaster; a night fit to place at the head of a catalogue of terror, and one never to be forgotten by those who experienced any of its fury.

From dusk to dawn a tempest swept the Gulf waters as with a besom of destruction, and its flight being from west to east, the peninsula of Florida felt its influence in the uprooting of trees and the overturning of the more frail houses.

Just as the sun dipped out of sight the Argyl passed Florida Keys, the light on the furthest point of land being clearly discernible to the watch on deck.

"What do you think of the weather?" asked one of the sailors of Jack Atwell, who stood at the binnacle.

"Not much," was the reply; "the air is so close, and that cloud out yonder is rather threatening; it has grown wonderfully large within the last half-hour."

"Always hate this coast," said the other; "it appears to me as if there is death in the Gulf Stream for me."

Atwell smiled incredulously, and said:

"You are not so superstitious as that, are you?"

"I don't care what you call it, Atwell. I've always had a lurking fear of this Florida coast. The first time I ever made this run—and that's close on fifteen years ago—I was caught in a squall just about here somewhere, and the old hulk, Morning Glory, went to pieces under my feet. Three years ago on the Miranda I had the same luck in about the same place, and you know there is said to be a mystic something in numbers three."

At any rate, I fear the next squall that hits me hereabouts will be my last."

Even Atwell seemed impressed with the sailor's presentiment, and, instead of laughing outright, as he would have done under circumstances almost similar, he said:

"Morgan, it ain't right to give up to such fancies; they unfit a man for duty when the hour of trial comes; but I wouldn't care a penny for a gale here, or anywhere else for that matter, if I hadn't a sort of guardianship over the young lady—Mrs. Cuthbert. That kind of hampers a fellow in, you know, and makes him pray for good weather."

"Yes," Morgan replied, "a man can make a shift, but the women, poor devils, have no chance—it's die with them; and if a fellow tries to save them, they both drown together."

The captain, coming on deck at this moment, interrupted the conversation by ordering every stitch of canvas to be closely reefed.

"Well! had bare poles broad enough before many hours," he said to his mate, as he glanced at the black monster that had crept up the sky almost to the zenith.

He was not a false prophet, for, ere the half-hour had expired, the storm broke forth in all its maddening fury, with a shriek like that of a fiendish legion, fresh from the revels of Tartarus.

The masts bent like whip-poles; the sea swept over the decks in a blinding sheet of foam; and every joint of timber creaked and groaned as if the old vessel was a sentient thing, and felt that the hour of doom had come.

Dora, seated in her state-room, dreaming of the happiness that would follow her meeting with her husband, heard the first attack of the tempest as one hears sounds in a dream, in which consciousness is deadened by sleep. It came so suddenly, and so fierce, it was not until the heavy hush of the vessel left her body stunned upon the floor that she realized fully the danger of her situation.

Staggering to her feet, she made an effort to reach the deck, but, before she had crossed

ed the threshold of her room, Jack Atwell came bounding into the cabin.

"Don't be frightened," he said; "'tis only a black squall and will soon be over."

"But, Mr. Atwell, it sounds so terribly violent," she exclaimed; "don't you think there is danger of us going down?"

"Yes, there is danger, of course," he replied; "but it will have to last a long time or the old Argyl will weather it out. I have come down to gather the ladies together until the storm blows over."

"For what purpose?" asked Dora, her face blanched white as death.

"To prevent you from becoming terrified by being all alone."

"Where are the others?"

"In the captain's cabin."

She followed him along the passage, groping her way, for the lights had been extinguished, and finally she felt the pressure of a woman's hand.

She knew, even in the darkness, that it was that of the captain's wife, and she was quick to ask:

"Do you think there is any danger?"

"I don't know," was the reply; "the storm is a fearful one."

"If the worst comes to the worst," whispered Jack Atwell, in Dora's ear, "I will come for you. Don't stir, for your life, until I come."

She promised him she would not, and then he hurried away.

When his footsteps could be no longer heard, she fell upon her knees, and prayed, oh, so fervently for a calm, for safety, in that hour of peril—that she might not be allowed to die there amid that wilderness of waters—that she might be spared at least to see her husband once more, if only to say farewell forever.

The thought of going down into the depths alone—of closing her eyes in the green waters, and of sleeping away the years among the sea-weed and sands far, so very far, away from her home and those dear to her, filled her with an agony that almost unsettled her reason.

Not a word was spoken by the four women who knelt there in the darkness. It was not a time for words. Each was engaged in poor humanity's last resource—prayer.

The moments flew, and still the storm raged, and still the timbers creaked and groaned, and still hope fluttered in the breasts of the drenched crew who clung to the deck.

At length the crisis came; the Argyl had sprung a leak, and was rapidly filling.

"Man the pumps!" shouted the captain, as soon as the fact had been made known to him; "man the pumps! There is a chance yet."

It proved but a slim one, as the water gained fast upon them, notwithstanding their most strenuous efforts, and two poor seamen were washed from the decks into eternity.

"She's going, Atwell," said the captain, after a while; "you had better look after your charge."

Jack nodded ass

A CONFESSION

BY NELLE B.

Frank, I love you!—dearly, fondly,
More than words can ever express;
Thoughts might fail and tongue might falter,
If my love I would confess.

Life is love—without it, darkness
Would overshadow every part;
But its rays bring joy and gladness
To this true and faithful heart.

Then come to me, through joy and sadness,
Summer heat or Winter rain,
You can bring me light and gladness
Pure, unalloyed with woe or pain.

Caught in Silken Toils.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

A VERY elegant breakfast parlor it was, that of the Westcliffs; and this morning of which I write, it looked, if such a thing were possible, more thoroughly comfortable than usual.

To be sure, the contrast between the driving storm of sleet without, and the warm, delicately-perfumed air within, between the utter cheerlessness of the icy-clad avenue, and the perfect home-cheeriness that pervaded the large, lofty apartment, might account for it; and young Earle Westcliff, as he sauntered leisurely in, as the cuckoo sung out nine o'clock, yawned most appreciatively over the glowing, crackling anthracite.

"I'm a little late this morning, I see. Have you been waiting, mother?"

It was a pleasant, finely-modulated voice, that matched well with Earle Westcliff's handsome face and graceful figure. As he spoke, Mrs. Westcliff arose from a low *fau-tuil* by the fireside; a large, fair woman, in a sweeping black cashmere morning-robe; with a fair, blonde complexion, light *crêpe* hair, and cold, steely eyes.

Not a whit like her son in manners or appearance, only a cold-hearted, high-headed woman, whose money and position alone took her where Earle Westcliff's sunny temper and winsome sweetness would have made him welcome.

"Late? Yes, you are seven minutes after time. I suppose, however, I should have looked for this tardiness, considering the nature of the morning," we agreed to finally settle this morning.

She held her Lady Elgin in her hand while she spoke; then, with a slow, almost severe gesture, snapped the case, and returned it to her belt.

A light cloud shadowed Earle's face for a moment.

"I wish I could forget it. Shall we discuss these broiled quail first? or the question of my marriage?"

He essayed to laugh, as he drew a chair for his mother.

"I hardly think Miss Paxton would feel honored by your remark, Earle. The lady I wish you to regard as the future Mrs. Westcliff."

"Then I am to understand your views are unalterable, mother? Pardon me for interrupting, but I am sorry you will not listen to any of my objections."

Earle spoke bitterly, yet very courteously, and Mrs. Westcliff went on, more coldly still.

"You know the provisions of your father's will as well as I do; and I presume Miss Jessie Paxton has been taught to regard her parents' wishes in this affair. I am unfortunate, indeed, in that I possess for my son the only one who wishes to set aside a dying man's latest request."

And Mrs. Westcliff's wide-bordered lawn mouchoir, that had been dangling from her jet bracelet by its massive ebony holder, was gracefully pressed against her eyes.

Earle bit his lip in momentary anger; then, by a great effort, cleared his brow and essayed to feel, as he certainly did not, at his case.

He had been used to such scenes with his mother, as long as he could remember; when she, with a sort of icy tyranny compelled him to yield acquiescence to her wishes.

Now, to be sure, when he was twenty-six, it seemed ridiculous that he was not free to marry whom he pleased. In a measure he was free, perfectly free; then, if he used his own discretion, and did not unite his fortune with Jessie Paxton, all his share of his father's abundance was to be withheld.

He never had seen Jessie Paxton, nor she him; but they were to meet now, and that was why the question of the marriage was to be settled at once. For Jessie's mother had telegraphed to Earle's mother for Earle to bring Jessie.

Now, when the ice was fairly broken between the two, mother and son, and the question settled itself, as it seemed, they both ate their breakfast in thoughtful silence. Then, with a pleasant "Good-morning," Earle went out from the room.

The storm was still driving against the windows as furiously as ever, but Earle did not regard it, as he went up the avenue, and only buttoned his fur-lined collar higher around his ears.

The telegraph office was not far, and his dispatch to Mrs. Paxton soon sent. Then he went home, and sought his mother at once.

"I think it best to tell you at once what I have done, and what I propose doing. I can not allow myself to take for my wife this young lady I never have seen, consequently neither know nor care for. I have telegraphed, Mrs. Paxton that I am sorry I must be so discourteous, but I can not bring Miss Jessie here under the supposition that she is to be my wife. I am going away—to Cuba, I think."

Then Mrs. Westcliff slowly gathered her sweeping skirt in one hand, and in what she intended to be the awfulest, iciest displeasure, strode from the room, speechless.

And Earle, wounded by her unsympathetic coldness, walked straight to the office and bought a ticket, not for a passage to Cuba, but for the West.

It was a quiet, ugly little town where the Express halted for five minutes' refreshments; and Earle Westcliff, as he stretched in his seat, wondered if aught could be less pleasurable than a ride in the cars on a raw, gusty winter day.

There wasn't a single pretty woman in the cars. One or two elderly married ones, each with a restless baby, and a number of plain, countenanced-looking people occupied the car. Earle had his seat to himself, half of which he occupied, the other half being unlawfully piled with a robe and a small Russia leather valise, both bearing his full name in staring white letters.

Discontented, and almost miserable, Earle sat ungracefully back in one corner, with his hat jammed over his eyes; then, of a sudden, he found himself listening to the sweetest voice he ever had heard in his life.

"Oh, thank you, Conductor Elverson! This seat will do nicely, if the gentleman will kindly remove his baggage."

Wouldn't Earle remove his baggage? And didn't he, with wonderful alacrity? And then she sat down beside him, that sweet-voiced girl, with the tiny, dimpled mouth and tiny, milk-white teeth.

Earle could have told you in less than five minutes how deeply blue her long-lashed eyes were, and how her purple black hair rippled and waved as it floated unconfined over her shoulders.

He was a connoisseur, too, in regard to ladies' toilets, and a glance sufficed him to discover that she wore a dainty lace-trimmed black Cashmere dress, with the most exquisite silk polonaise; that her gloves were Alexanders, four buttons, and certainly No. 6s.

Altogether, Earle found her to be the prettiest, most charming girl he ever had seen; so vivacious, yet so thoroughly modest and ladylike.

Then, very naturally, he grew to wondering what those initials on her handkerchief stood for—"C. N." Finally, when they had talked themselves into very good friends, he ventured to ask her.

She laughed and blushed.

"N" is for Nelson—not so beautiful a name as your own, Mr. Westcliff," and she pointed to his watch.

"Allow me to hope the owner of the name you admire will find equal favor with you, Miss Nelson, and if it is not asking too much, may I offer my services as far as we travel together? Are you bound through to New York?"

"Clear through, and alone, although Conductor Elverson kindly takes charge of me so far as he goes. I was determined to come, you see, Mr. Westcliff, although my cavalier refused to escort me, at the last minute, and my trunk was packed, too."

She laughed so daintily, and looked so coquettishly at Earle, that he would willingly have offered to punch that derelict fellow's head. What a fool any man was who would not go through fire and water to serve so fair a girl!

"So I came myself, you see, minus that all-important adjunct to travel."

So he would have company all the way to New York—seven hours ride yet—and his heart bounded with the delightful prospect. He actually wondered if he was not in love with this strange girl, this Miss Nelson? How curious were Cupid's freaks; what strange havoc the little god did make! Why could he not have thus loved Jessie Paxton, whom everybody was so anxious he should love? Instead, he momentarily felt convinced that Miss Nelson was the sweetest, most charming girl he ever had seen. Such a delicious ride as that was; how perfectly changed was the gloomy, dusty, gusty day; how daintily Miss Nelson's fingers toyed with the honey-made iced sponge-cake in her satchel, and how he devoured the piece she laughingly offered him—he, Earle Westcliff, the aristocrat!

But all good times have an end; so had those seven hours, and when Earle had escorted her to the Hoffman House, and begged to be allowed to call on her at her friend's residence, he felt that his destiny was at stake.

He did not go straight home; in truth, he had no disposition to see his severe lady mother, and tell her he did not go to Cuba after all, but that he had found his future wife—if he could win Miss Nelson.

But, after a bath, and a change of toilet, and a good dinner at Delmonico's—and how such things do affect the men!—Earle concluded he would go home, and set about his love business in a serious manner.

The drawing-room was rather dimly lighted, and he entered unannounced; his mother met him half-way down the apartment.

"Earle—you naughty boy! I thought you positively refused to escort Jessie—"

Here she suddenly turned up the gas, and then Earle saw, first, Mrs. Westcliff's radiant face; then, Miss Nelson herself, all blushes and smiles.

"You needn't be surprised; it is really I"—and Jessie Paxton came forward, gracefully. "I came from the Hoffman House quicker than you did, that's all."

But Earle was surprised, surprised almost out of his customary courtesy, surprised almost out of his customary courtesy, surprised almost out of his customary courtesy, surprised almost out of his customary courtesy.

"But I thought you said you were Miss Nelson—"

She laughingly interrupted him.

"No, I did not say so. I said 'C. N.' meant Carrie Nelson—my sister who is married, you know; and one of whose handkerchiefs I had with me, by mistake."

She was so saucy, and—so sweet; what could Earle do but join her in laughing over their joke?

"Of course I knew you in a moment, by the name on your luggage; but you will forgive me—won't you?"

He did forgive her; and he married her to prove it.

ROYAL KEENE,

THE

California Detective:

OR,

The Witches of New York.

A ROMANCE OF FOUR GIRLS' LIVES.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "OVERLAND KIT," "WOLF DEMON," "ACE OF SPADES," "RED MAZEPA," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

At the Hudson River Railway Depot the cars of the 6 P. M. Pacific express were in waiting.

By the gate leading to the train stood a brown-bearded gentleman, plainly dressed, apparently waiting for some one, for he cast anxious glances around, and every now and then consulted his watch.

"Why the deuce don't he come?" he queried, probably for the twentieth time, as he again consulted his time-piece. "Only ten minutes more. I can't go without instructions; that is very plain."

The brown bearded gentleman peered earnestly into the faces of the crowd who were passing by him to take seats in the train, but his inspection was evidently without results.

As the impatient watcher tapped nervously with his foot, and fumbled with his watch-chain, another gentleman, who had just entered the depot, sauntered carelessly to his side, and stood there, apparently without any particular object.

A single, piercing glance the brown-bearded man gave at the new-comer, and then again resumed his watch upon the little throng pouring forward into the cars.

The second man was about the medium height, dark hair, cut short, and dark eyes; his face cleanly shaven. He was dressed very plain, almost poorly, in dark clothes, and wore a dark cap, pulled over his forehead.

"Why don't he come?" again muttered the watcher, with another look at his time-piece. "Only five minutes more. I shall miss this train, sure!"

"Getting tired of waiting?" said the poorly-dressed man at his side, calmly.

The watcher turned and looked at the questioner in utter surprise; but, as he surveyed him from head to foot, the look upon his face changed from one of wonder to one of recognition.

"Well, you can take me into camp for all I'm worth!" he cried, in amazement. "Blessed if I know you!"

"Is my get-up as complete as all that?" said the other, laughing.

"That's so; I took a good look at you when you came up, too," the brown-bearded man answered.

"I thought I would try it on you; if I succeeded in deceiving the eyes of the sharpest detective in New York, I can hardly fail with anybody else."

No humbug, you know," the other said, but still with a smile on his face at the compliment.

"Oh, honest Injun! fame speaks in spite of your modesty."

"But, what is the reason of this get-up?" "The man that I'm after is a cool, desperate hand if he wants to be. When he finds out that I have struck his trail in earnest, he may think that the easiest way to baffle me will be to get some rough to lay me out. In the game I'm playing I don't intend to lose a single trick if I can help it; so, for the present, James Bright, the California detective will mysteriously disappear."

The new-comer, who had, by such simple means as cutting off his hair, changing his clothes, and giving himself a clean shave, so altered his outward appearance, was, indeed, the man who had sworn such bitter vengeance on David Van Rensselaer.

His companion, the quick-eyed gentleman with the flowing brown beard, was Richard Cranshaw, by common report reputed to be one of the keenest detectives in the country.

"You're wise," Cranshaw said; "nothing like being prepared. But, what instructions? About time for the train to move off, you know."

Bright took a letter from his pocket and put it into the hands of the detective.

"You will find all instructions written in this," he said, as he handed the detective the letter. "I partially followed the trail up myself three years ago. I have noted down all the points I gained. All I discovered, though, were the facts about the birth and parentage of the child. I didn't hunt up the girl herself. But now the case has altered. We must have the girl; work to find her; that is our strong point. Once the girl is in my hands the game is won."

"I'll do my best; you have written out the instructions in full?"

"Yes, you change cars at Rome. Sandy Creek is only a little bit of a place," Bright said. "Of course be careful not to let any one guess what you're after, if you can help it. My bird may possibly be in communication with some one up there, although I hardly think it possible. But, if he should happen to be a hint of your search would put him on his guard."

"I'll be careful."

Then the bell rung; the detective jumped on board the train, and, as it moved off, Bright sauntered slowly out of the depot.

"So much of the train laid," he muttered; "it won't be very long before the explosion comes. Let me find the heir, and then, Mr. David Van Rensselaer, look out for me."

Bright crossed over to Broadway and walked down that broad thoroughfare.

Slowly he walked onward, busy in meditation.

Just as he crossed Twenty-fourth street, he came face to face with a lady walking in the opposite direction.

A single glance the keen-eyed detective gave at the face of the lady, and he stood still in speechless astonishment.

The lady, who was both young and pretty, never noticed the stare, but passed on by the street.

Bright turned and looked after her.

"Now, then, you young fellow, will you get out of the way, or do you want a first-class funeral?"

The above speech, hurled indignantly at Bright by a coachman, who had been compelled to rein up his horses suddenly to keep from running over the astonished man, recalled the detective to himself.

"All right, Johnny; go ahead with your mule team," the detective said, returning to the curbstone, and following in the footsteps of the woman who had so strangely attracted his attention.

"It's either her or her ghost!" Bright muttered, as he walked onward. "She's changed a great deal, but it's her face. I'd bet all my Young America No. 2 stock on it. Judging from her dress, the world has gone well with her. She looks gay as a pink, and ain't she pretty?"

The cool detective smiled as he put the question to himself.

The lady walked briskly onward, little thinking that her footsteps were so closely followed.

"It would be funny if I should stumble on her just in this accidental way," Bright muttered, communing with himself as he followed up the chase. "Sleeping or waking, for three years that face has been constantly in my mind. In the diggings, every time I've seen the gold panning out from the cradle, I've also seen her face smiling at me from the muddy water. Well, now, to drop on her in this unexpected way is really what I call luck, and no mistake."

On went the lady; close behind followed the detective, until at last she entered a store. Bright remained outside on the watch.

After a few minutes she came out, with a little parcel in her hand, and proceeded to retrace her steps, going down Broadway. Still the detective followed.

She turned into Twenty-third street, went down the street quite a little distance, and tripped up the steps of a modest little brick house.

"Run to earth, by jingo!" cried Bright, in glee. He had followed cautiously; drop-

ping a little in the rear, so as to not excite the suspicion of the girl that she was watched.

The door closed behind the lady, and the detective stood outside in the gloom, gazing up at the house.

"Now, how the deuce am I going to find out what she is or who she is—whether she lives here or is only making a visit?" he queried, as he looked up at the house. "Well, impudence must carry me through here."

He ascended the steps and rung the bell.

After a few moments the door opened, and a woman, evidently the servant of the house, appeared.

"Miss Jones," said the detective, blandly. The servant girl stared at the questioner, the confident tone in which he spoke puzzled her.

"An' is it Miss Jones?" she asked, doubtfully.

"Yes, Miss Jones," the detective repeated.

"An' does she live here?" asked the girl, her voice betraying strong proof of south-of-Ireland birth.

"That is what I want to find out."

"Oh, I thought from the way ye axed, ye knew she lived here, an' it was bothered at was, for no one of that name lives here at all," the girl said, her mind evidently relieved.

"But the young lady that went in just now, dressed in black, with a red sash—"

"Shure, her name isn't Jones?"

"No," cried the detective, in apparent astonishment.

"That's Miss York, the stage actress—Miss Corallie York."

"An' does she live here?"

"Av course she does!" the girl replied.

The detective had discovered what he wished to learn.

"Well, now! I really thought it was Miss Jones, a very intimate friend of mine. I made a mistake. I'm very sorry to trouble you," and the detective took his departure.

"Shure, he's a rael gentleman," the girl said, as she closed the door.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MASQUERADE.

Just about an hour after the interview at the depot between the two detectives, the Western express rolled into the building.

From one of the cars came a tall, stately old gentleman, with long iron-gray hair and a flowing beard of the same color. His face was bronzed almost to the color of an Indian. In his hand he carried a small carpet bag.

As he stepped upon the platform, he looked inquiringly around him as if he expected to meet some one.

Hardly had the old gentleman passed upon the platform, when from the little knot of people gathered at the nearest door, Van Rensselaer's ally, Mr. Bishop, advanced.

He came forward directly to the old man.

"Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Hartright?" he asked, of the old gentleman.

"That is my name, sir," the stranger replied.

"Allow me to introduce myself; my name is Bishop; Mr. Van Rensselaer deputed me to meet you at the train."

"Mr. Van Rensselaer is not here, then?"

"No, sir; he has been called out of town on important business," Bishop answered.

"He desired me to tell you that he was very much disappointed at not being able to meet you, but the business was urgent and required his personal attention; in the mean time, until his return, he requested me to fill his place and see that you were comfortably bestowed. Mr. Van Rensselaer also wished me to say that he deeply regretted he was unable to entertain you at his mansion, but hoped that you would accept his hospitality at any hotel which might seem fit to you."

"I am such a stranger in New York that I really do not know where I had better go," the old gentleman said.

"If you will permit me to arrange the matter—that is, if you have no particular preference—"

"None at all."

"I would suggest the St. Nicholas."

"That will do."

"Have you any baggage?"

"Nothing but this," the old man replied.

"I am a true traveler, and do not believe in much luggage, although my traveling has been mostly done in the jungles of India."

"I'll call a coach."

Bishop did so, and the two were driven at once to the hotel.

The New Yorker attended to seeing the old gentleman bestowed in a comfortable room, and then the two had supper.

The repast over, the two adjourned to the reading-room, and drawing their chairs to the window, gazed out on brilliant, flashing Broadway.

"Half-past eight," said Bishop, consulting his watch. "I suppose that you feel fatigued by your journey and will retire early."

"Oh, no," the old gentleman replied. "I am so used to travel and hardships that the trip from Buffalo has not tired me in the least."

"I was just going to suggest that, if you were not too much fatigued, we might visit the Academy of Music. There is a grand masquerade ball given there to-night; I was presented with a couple of tickets this afternoon. It would serve to pass the evening away."

"That's an excellent idea," responded Hartright. "I think I should enjoy that. I haven't been to a masquerade for years."

"This is to be a magnificent affair, I believe. We can get there by half-past nine or ten easily enough."

"But will we not require some disguises?" the old gentleman asked.

"We can stop at a costumer's and get some dominoes and masks on our way up; we pass right by one," Bishop answered.

"I suppose we might as well set out at once."

"Certainly."

The two left the hotel, summoned a carriage, and drove toward the Academy of Music.

On their way thither, they stopped at a costumer's, and procured two black dominoes and masks.

When the two, after donning their disguises, made their entry into the Academy, they found that the floor was already well filled with groups of gayly-dressed maskers.

"A brilliant scene, isn't it?" Bishop re-

marked, taking the mask from his face, as if to gaze with more freedom upon the ever-changing throng.

"Yes, quite dazzling," the old man replied, and as he gazed upon the merry groups, his attention was attracted by a couple passing near him, a man and woman, both in black, and on the back of the man's sable domino was a large red heart.

The two were chatting gayly together; a few words spoken by the woman's lips reached the ears of the old man.

With a quick, nervous motion, Hartright laid his hand upon the arm of Bishop.

"Come, let us walk onward," he said, a strange nervousness visible in his manner. "Certainly," Bishop replied, wondering at the tone of the old man.

Hartright followed directly in the wake of the couple in black. Bishop noticed the red heart on the back of the man's domino, and a half-smile came over his face. A few minutes' walk convinced him that his companion was following the two.

The two in black did not go far, but turned and retraced their steps, coming almost face to face with the old savant and Bishop.

The man in black shot a quick glance at Bishop as he passed him—a glance seemingly of recognition. The savant did not notice the look; he had eyes only for the woman.

Three times up and down the hall, the old man and Bishop followed in the footsteps of the two in black.

The old gentleman seemed to be getting more and more nervous. Bishop determined to hazard a question.

"You seem to have taken an interest in that couple in black; do you know them?" he asked.

"I don't know—I can't tell," the old man answered, nervously; "it seems impossible,

whether you are the person or not," the old savant said.

"You really wish to see my face?" Coralie asked, slowly.

"Yes, for in your face I shall be sure to trace the resemblance of the child I once loved as if she were my own daughter, if you are indeed the same, and something within whispers me that you are."

Coralie hesitated for a moment; she did not know how to act. Van Rensselaer had pointed the tall stranger out to her as the old friend of his father—the subject of the wager which he wished her help to win. If she yielded to Van Rensselaer's request, she would be able to discover whether she was the child spoken of by the stranger or not.

"If I am the child, grown to womanhood, what would be my age now?" Coralie asked, breaking the silence.

The old man thought for a moment, calculated the time that had elapsed, then spoke:

"Twenty-five," he answered.

Coralie started in amazement. The old man had named her very age.

Hartright noticed the movement.

"Is that your age?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And you are an orphan?"

"Yes."

"And have been so since your childhood?"

"Yes."

"Father and mother you have never known?"

"Never," the girl replied, sadly.

"I am sure that you are the one I seek!" the old man said, in a tone of firm conviction.

"Perhaps so; and yet it hardly seems possible that fate could have thus strangely brought us together after so many years of separation," Coralie said, doubtfully.

"Fortune is strangely capricious sometimes," he answered. "But I pray you yield to my request. You are the child I seek, I am sure. Every word you speak strengthens me in my conviction."

"Let me speak a moment to the gentleman who is with me, and then I will decide," the girl said, suddenly, after a long pause.

"I shall wait your decision with great impatience," the old man said, earnestly.

"In a few minutes you shall have my answer."

Coralie advanced toward Van Rensselaer; he, perceiving her movement, left Bishop and came to her.

"I see that you have commenced operations," he said, laughing; "have you decided then to act as my ally in this jest?"

"Not yet decided," she said, doubtfully.

"I am not sure that I fully understand the part which you wish me to play."

"Why, it is simple enough. The wager is to induce the old gentleman to leave this ball-room and go to the house of a friend of mine, there to drink a glass of wine. That wins the wager. If you only think of some jesting device to induce him to go with you, I will be in the carriage of course, so that there will be no improbability."

"The device is already at hand," the girl said, slowly.

"Indeed!" Van Rensselaer was astonished.

"The old gentleman overheard me speaking to you as we passed him sometime ago in the ball-room; he fancied from the tones of my voice that in former days he knew me, and he wishes to see my face, so as to satisfy himself whether his guess is true or false."

"Excellent!" Van Rensselaer exclaimed; "fortune aids us; no need to puzzle our wits here. Tell the old gentleman that you will remove your mask and let him see your face if he will leave the ball-room and come with us. Explain that it is only to the house of a friend of mine."

"I do not know whether to consent or not," the girl said, doubtfully.

"Why, Coralie, haven't you any womanly curiosity?" asked Van Rensselaer, in astonishment. "Haven't you really a desire to know whether this old gentleman is right or wrong in his surmise?"

"Yes, the temptation is a very great one," Coralie said, slowly.

"Yield to it then; who knows but what he may be able to reveal to you something of great importance?" Van Rensselaer said, persuasively.

"I will go," the girl said, decidedly.

"Good; our coach is all ready."

"I will tell the old gentleman."

Coralie returned to the old savant.

"Let me venture to hope that you have decided to grant my request?" Hartright said, earnestly.

"Yes, but on one condition."

"I accept, no matter what the condition is," the savant exclaimed, hastily.

"Oh, it is a very simple one; only to leave this room and come with me—or with us, I should have said, for the gentleman yonder, my escort, will go with us."

"I accept the condition, and the sooner we depart the better. I feel certain that you are the one whom I seek."

"You shall soon know the truth."

Coralie beckoned, and Van Rensselaer approached. Disguised as he was, he had little fear of being recognized by the old man; so that in the future, when they should meet, his part in the present transaction would be unknown.

"We are ready," Coralie said.

Van Rensselaer did not speak, only bowed and led the way to the door. Coralie and Hartright followed, while Bishop brought up the rear.

"I suppose that there will be no objection to my friend accompanying us?" the old gentleman said, referring to Bishop.

"None in the least," the girl answered.

In a few words the savant explained to Bishop whether he was going, and his object, and requested his company, to which Bishop of course assented.

The four left the ball-room and passed into the entry.

Hardly had they passed through the door, when two men, without disguises of any kind, but in plain, dark clothes, only wearing black masks over their faces, detached themselves from the crowd and followed the little party of four.

The four were just getting into a carriage. The two men paused on the steps, until the carriage drove off.

"What's our game now?" asked the taller of the two, who, as the light from the gas-lights fell upon his face, we recognize as Joe Oward.

"Trump their trick," replied the other, ironically. "It was the California detective, Bright, who spoke."

"You mean, follow 'em?"

"No; I mean to get ahead of them."

Then the detective drew a little whistle and blew a shrill note upon it.

In a second or so a covered buggy, which had been standing on the other side of the street, drew up in front of the Academy.

A bright-looking negro drove the buggy.

"Now, jump in, Joe!" cried Bright, springing into the carriage, and taking the reins from the driver's hands.

Oward got in at once.

"Wait at the stable, Ned," the detective said to the boy.

"You know where to go?" Oward asked, in astonishment.

"Yes, to the worst hole in all big New York, John Allen's dance house in Water street. Get up!"

And way they went.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 119.)

The Hidden Treasure.

BY C. D. CLARK.

In the flush of a beautiful day in June a young girl was seen riding rapidly through a belt of timber, apparently in great haste.

Her eyes wandered from side to side, as she rode, as if fearing danger; and indeed there was good cause, for this was the day of Tory ascendancy in the Carolinas, and the country swarmed with predatory bands, who did not know the name of mercy as applied to a Whig, were it man or woman.

The girl rode gracefully and well, sitting erect in her saddle, and controlling the motions of her spirited steed with the hand of a mistress.

"Steady, Nemo," she said, as the brave black swerved a little. "There is nothing to fear."

Even as she spoke, the bushes parted and three men sprang suddenly forth, one of whom caught her horse by the bridle and brought him to a stand. Both were clad in the green uniform of the Royalist rifles, and one wore the insignia of a captain.

"You must excuse us, Miss Emily," said the captain, removing his cap even while holding the bridle, "but the exigencies of the service compel us to do many things which we would not do willingly. You are suspected of conveying a message from the rebel General Greene to Sumter, and you must submit to a search."

The lady looked about her in alarm. The woods were open, but they were manifestly safe from interruption. She saw that there was nothing for her but submission, and she quietly inclined her head.

"Denial upon my part would be useless, and I will not attempt it. Where will you take me, Captain Baird?"

"To my mother's house, Emily. You know that I would not willingly do anything to offend you, but my duty is plain."

"No doubt, captain. I do not blame you, but on the contrary, I thank you for performing your duty in so delicate a manner. I assure you that you will find nothing upon my person."

"I would take your word as far as I am concerned, but as a mere form, and in order to report to my superiors that I have done my duty, I will have my mother search you. It is known that Greene took dinner at your house yesterday, and that shortly after you mounted, crossed the Wateree at the Camden Ferry, and you are now on a direct course for Sumter's camp."

"I wish you no evil, Captain Baird, but at the same time, I should be glad to hear his bugles. You know that I am a Whig, Robert."

"That is the first time you have spoken kindly to me for over a year, Emily Gage," he said. "You know that I love you, and you hate me."

"No, Robert; I do not hate you, but the cause in which you are engaged. You are joined with the hirelings of tyranny to beat down the arms of your neighbors, and to aid in riveting the chains of oppression upon them. While you uphold such a cause you can not expect love from Emily Gage."

He was silent now, and, mounting his horse, led the way at a rapid trot through the woods toward a house upon an eminence not far away. The expression of his face was downcast and sullen, and from time to time he bent a lowering look upon Emily.

"Where is Angus Thurman now, Emily?" he said, as they approached the house.

"Where you ought to be, raising the sword in defense of his country."

"He is with Marion?"

"Yes."

"Enough; I shall meet him some day, and when I do—"

He did not complete the sentence; but the smothered ferocity of his tone was enough to explain his meaning.

"You would not dare to meet him," cried Emily. "He would beat you to the earth, and set his foot upon you."

"Would he so? Wait until the time comes, and you shall see who is the better man—this proud rebel, Angus Thurman, or Robert Baird. You do not know me, Emily, but your eyes shall be opened."

They reached the house, and Emily was placed in a room by herself, while Baird went away to find his mother to make the search. The moment the door closed behind him, Emily took out a paper from her bosom, and, tearing it into small pieces, swallowed it quickly, but not a moment too soon.

The last bit was in her mouth when the door opened, and a hard-featured woman entered, who proceeded to search for the suspected letter. Her search was in vain, and she so reported to her son.

He came back, looking crestfallen enough, and apologized to the lady for stopping her, and led her to the door, where her horse was waiting.

"You have outwitted us this time, Miss Gage, but it will not be always so. In the end I shall win."

Emily answered by a strange smile, and springing lightly into the saddle, rode away to the south. That night Sumter's troop was in motion to join Greene, and it was whispered through the camps that Emily Gage had carried the message after all, as she had committed it to memory, and Captain Baird determined to punish the family of Gage for the act.

Night on the Wateree. No sound save the sullen plunge of the terrapin, and the cry of the night-birds in the covers. A body of men, with their weapons shining in the moonlight, are crossing the river into Fairfield district. A single glance at the green coats and waving plumes is enough to identify them with the celebrated Loyal Scout, led by Robert Baird. That night the

house of Gage was in ruins, and the old man barely escaped with his life. His slaves, stock, every thing of value, had been swept away, but the celebrated plate and jewelry of the family, a fortune alone, was not to be found.

Robert Baird was not satisfied. If he could make them utter beggars, his revenge would be complete, but while they had this rich property hidden, they could laugh at him. He swore that he would give them no rest until the plate and jewels were in his hands.

The Gage family had removed to one of the negro huts after the retreat of the Loyal Scout. They knew that they were not safe, for the Scout yet haunted the swamp, and might at any moment break out upon them. Baird had sent them a message that he would give them no rest until he had humbled the pride of Emily, and had made her repent her scorn of him.

The change in their fortunes was a great one. From the grand old mansion, now in ruins, to the lowly negro-quarters was a great fall, but the sturdy spirit of the gallant old Whig enabled him to bear it.

"Greene will soon drive the Englishmen out of the High Hills," he said, "and when that is done, we will again build up the old house."

"Have you the means, dear father?" said Emily.

"Means? The rascals think they have stripped me bare, but I have enough for my use whenever I need it."

"Is it hidden?"

"Safely, where Baird and his thieves can never find it. Ha! I thought I heard a noise. Run to the door and look out, Emily."

She obeyed, but no one was in sight. The old man was ill at ease, and went out into the night, and looked carefully about. He knew that Baird could be an unrelenting foe, and that in his wild way he loved Emily, and hated all who aspired to her.

There had been a time, before the war, when a union between the families of Baird and Gage had been seriously thought of, but the sides the families had taken in this contest had made that impossible, although Robert had clung to the hope of one day winning Emily, until he knew that the young rebel, Thurman, had taken his place in her heart.

The old Whig left the house and made his way cautiously across the fields toward the High Hills at the back of the plantation. He plunged into the thick undergrowth, and made his way through it for some distance, until he reached the base of the hill. Parting a thick growth of vines and creeping plants, he disclosed the entrance to a cavern some twenty feet square. Drawing his sword, he knelt upon one knee, and thrusting the blade into the earth, he worked it to and fro until it struck some metallic substance, which gave out a sharp clink.

"It is all safe," muttered the old man. "Sooner shall Marion or Sumter be enriched by its contents, than the minions of King George."

"Fool!" cried a harsh voice. "We have you at last. Seize him, men, and then for the spoils!"

Lights flashed on every side and revealed a score of the Loyal Scouts, their faces eager and savage under the light of the torches. The brave old Whig uttered a sharp cry and sprang up, sword in hand, and rushed desperately at the speaker, who was no other than Robert Baird. The young Tory received the thrust upon his sword-blade, parried it with ease, and the next moment Gage was struggling in the grasp of three strong men.

"We have not waited in vain, boys," cried the leader. "Dig here."

He pointed to the spot where the sword of the prisoner had loosened the soil, and spades and mattocks were at work over the spot. Gage struggled vainly with the men who held him, while Baird looked on, laughing at his fruitless efforts.

"Better be quiet, you cursed Whig," growled one of the men. "I tell you plainly that we ought to hang you to the first tree. You deserve it."

"Do; add another to the list of your base crimes. House-burners, robbers of women and children, your day of reckoning is not far off."

"Keep quiet, father-in-law," said Baird. "You may go so far that my influence will not be enough to save you from the swinging bough."

"Do your worst. I defy you."

At this moment the men digging up the soil uttered shouts of joy, and dragged out an iron-bound chest of considerable size, the lid of which was forced open, and revealed the massive plate and jewelry of the Gage family—enough to make the share of each man concerned in the robbery of great value.

"Shut the chest, boys," said Baird. "Upon my honor, this is better than my hopes. Now, old beggar, am I good enough for your daughter? Can you, a penniless outcast, despise Robert Baird?"

"Ay, more than ever. I knew Robert Baird as a gallant young man, who had unfortunately taken the wrong side. I know him now as a thief. But remember, none of you shall be enriched by this theft, for I will place in Rawdon's hand a list of the contents of this chest, and if you steal a penny's worth he will call you to a dear account."

The Tories began to mutter among themselves, and some of them lifted the chest and carried it out of the cave, while others dragged Mr. Gage after. When they reached the open air he saw one of them removing a coil of rope from his saddle, with a running noose at the end. He knew his fate then, and that they designed to hang him; that he might not reveal to Rawdon the secret of the chest. Robert Baird was trembling in every limb, but he knew the sanguinary character of his men well enough to believe that they would kill him if he interferred.

"Get it done as soon as you can, Fletcher," he gasped. "I can't see it myself."

"You won't have long to wait," said Fletcher. "Tie him, lads."

Gage was tightly bound, a gag thrust into his mouth, and the noose adjusted about his neck. The other end of the cord was thrown over the bough of a tree.

"Up with him!" cried Fletcher, and the body of the unfortunate man was swaying in the air.

At this moment came a wild bugle-call, and the cry of "Marion's men," and a band of mounted rifles dashed up at a gallop. The Loyal Scouts sprang to their saddles and dashed away at full speed, but too late. Another party met them, and, hemmed in on all sides, they died game—fighting to the

last—the patriots shouting "Tarleton's quarters!" as they fell. Baird was cut down in the first rush, and when the bloody fight was over he was lying dead upon the trampled sod, cloven down by the saber of Angus Thurman. Mr. Gage had been saved, though his neck was still encircled by the cord when the man who held the rope fell by a patriot saber. The old man took his danger as a warning, and his gold and jewels went into Greene's camp-chest, and were turned into steel weapons, which, in strong hands, aided to drive the invader from the shores of Carolina. When the struggle was over, Colonel Angus Thurman of Marion's brigade, married the beauty of Fairfield, Emily Gage, and the old grand sire lived to point out to their children the spot on which he so nearly yielded up his life for the good cause.

Outwitting the Bear.

BY ARCHIE IRONS.

"You see, boys, it war the most provokin' scrape I ever got into," said Jim Bently, aluding to one of his hunting adventures.

"It war several years ago, and I war trappin' with Rant Ecocals. It war comin' on cold weather, an' we built a good, comfortable shanty, with a little fire-place in one corner, and a hole in the roof right above to let the smoke out."

"It war the day afore Christmas, I remember, an' we'd cluded to keep it in style. We had venison, an' fish, an' bufler, an' every other kind of meat I guess, 'ceptin' turkey, an' as there war lots of 'em round, Rant said he'd go that arternoon an' kill a couple, so 'bout noon he took his gun an' started out."

"The fire in the shanty smoked sometimes an' bothered us considerable, so I tho't I'd make a chimney of sticks round the hole in the top of the shanty, an' p'raps 'twould draw better, so I took the ax an' cut a lot of sticks, an' throwed 'em up on top of the shanty, an' then clim' up the corners an' begun ter lay 'em up."

"I'd got the thing fixed purty well, an' war thinkin' 'bout goin' down, an' warn't— for it war a mighty cold day—an' jes' as I started, I heard suthin' go scratch, scratch, in the shanty."

"I knew I'd left the door open, an' I thought mo'n likely it war a coon or suthin', come 'long an' smelt the vittels an' meat, an' had gone in to see what he could find."

"Wal, I waited a minit an' then peeked down the chimney-hole to catch a glimpse of the varmint."

"I caught a glimpse, but it warn't a coon by a long shot, but about as big a b'ar as these ole eyes ever see, a-toastin' his shins afore the fire, an' after 'bout a minit he went to 't'other side the shanty an' went to scratchin' an' diggin' like mad."

"We'd took some pelts up to the fort awhile before, an' traded 'em for some coffee, flour an' sugar, an' had put 'em in a box in one side of the shanty, an' that war what the b'ar war at."

"There war some meat in the box, too, an' I s'pose he smelt that, too, an' the way he war diggin' an' tearin' war'n't slow. I knew he'd tear it to pieces in a minit, an' when he did, the flour an' stuff would be tumbled round the shanty purty quick. I thought of the coffee an' sugar, too, an' that made me so affraid mad, that I 'gun ter holter like all possess, an' tole him he'd better git out of that, or I'd fix him."

"He looked up when I begun to holler, an' as soon as he seed me he give a growl, an' went on tearin' at the box."

"I membered I'd left the ax right by the shanty door, an' thinks I, I'll go down an' git it, an', if he don't see me, I'll git my gun, which I knowed hung in the shanty close to the door."

"I run along the roof of the shanty, an' war goin' to jump off when, darn me if thar warn't nother b'ar on the outside of the shanty. He seed me as soon as I did him, an' 'gun ter growl an' raise himself on his hind legs, an' show his teeth, in a way that warn't pleasant I can tell y."

"I thought maybe I could git down on the other side of the shanty, but the minit I tried it, that darned b'ar war around thar in jist no time at all. I walked round the shanty an' tried it in three or four different places, but it warn't no go; that darned b'ar wouldoller every step I took, an' he kept right 'round that shanty an' me, do what I would."

"I tell yew what, boys, it war 'nough ter make a deacon swear, an' I warn't any better'n a deacon, an' the way I swore at that b'ar on the ground oughter 'stonished him, but it didn't."

"I holler'd, an' hooted, an' called him all the names I could think on, an' then commenced throwin' the chimney sticks at him, when I jist happened ter think that I'd better throw 'em at the b'ar inside, so I jist pulled 'em all down from the chimney an' layin' down on the roof, peeked through the chimney-hole at him."

"He'd got the box open, an' had got out a piece of meat, an' war settin' afore the fire eatin' it, big as life."

"He seed me when I peeked over, an' growled, as much as to say, I'd better let him alone, an' then kept on eatin'."

"At that I 'gan ter throw the sticks at him, but the darned varmint jist walked to the other side the shanty where I couldn't reach him; but I was bound to sarcumvent him somehow, so I took one of the largest sticks I could find, an' went to the end of the shanty over the door, an' reachin' down the stick, I cat'ched it on the top of the door, an' pulled it shet."

"I went back to the chimney then, an' dropped the stick down on the fire in the shanty. I put down 'nough of the sticks to make a purty good fire, an' as soon as I seed it was goin' to burn good, I took the rest of the sticks an' jist covered over the chimney-hole so that any smoke couldn't git out."

"After I'd fixed it, I set down on top of the shanty."

"I hadn't waited long 'fore I heard the b'ar in the shanty trampin' round, an' purty soon he begun ter snort, an' I heard him makin' a deuce of a racket. I thought the shanty mus' be comin' down, when crash went suthin' that shook the whole shanty. I jumped up an' saw jist what I expected to—the b'ar that was in the shanty had broke the door down, an' was goin' fer the woods as ef the Old Nick war after him. 'T'other b'ar, seein' that one run, took after it, an' I jumped down off the shanty, an' got my gun, an' shot him as he war goin' inter the woods. Jist then Rant come with a couple of turkeys, an' after dinner we dressed the b'ar, an' had b'ar-meat to add to our Christmas dinner next day."

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MY BEAUTY

BY GEORGE.

At morn, at noon, she trod the lane,
At night the meadows bore her;
While she the round sun o'er her;
And when the evening quiet came,
I watched her with my longing eyes
Pass 'neath the growing timber.

Ah! I was young, and older she,
But age I little thought of;
Where admiration strongly rules,
We think a few years naught of;
She should be mine—she must be mine,
I only, in the place
Gave to her adoration,
And called her movements grace.

How daintily was her every step!
How gently did she move!
I saw a beauty in her pace,
That moved my heart to love;
Her kindly eyes, like fairy dreams,
Looked out beyond this earth,
And oh, their sad expression
Whispered of angel-birth!

Weeks, months fled by: one sunny day
I called her to my garden;
And with my arm around her neck
I led her to my home;
The gate was closed—I led her through
As slow she came behind,
But here she ran against the post—
Ye gods! the mare was blind!

The Main Truck.

A SAILOR'S STORY.

BY LAUNCE PONTRE.

To while away the time when one is weary of monotony, what will not man do? He'll peril his life against all the beasts of the field and the monsters of the deep, and, falling those, will risk life and limb to exhibit the strength God gave him to use for good, in some gloriously piece of daring for looks to gaze at.

You know, boys, that when we're young we're full of strength, and most of us fond of gymnastic feats. The desire for such is a wise gift implanted in us to encourage us to exercise, for without exercise the muscles become soft and flabby, and we are unable to defend ourselves in times of danger. Moreover, exercise is the first necessity of health, and without the one we lose the other.

But exercise, like other good things, may be carried to excess, and a man too vain of bodily prowess very often comes to grief, besides involving others in danger, and may come to owe his life to those he despises as weaker than himself.

I've been a sailor all my life and therefore used to hard work, peril, and trials of nerve; but I never could see the sense of risking life and limb to gain empty applause, and I'll tell you a story that will show you how the smartest gymnast may attempt too much.

A good many years ago I commanded the clipper ship *Typhoon*, in the trade from New York to China. One summer we had made a splendid voyage, without striking skysails or sternsails all the way from New York to the Cape, and we were howling across the Indian Ocean, a thousand miles east of the Mauritius, before we met any heavy weather.

I had a number of passengers aboard, and several ladies, who found the time pass pretty slowly, but they were all easy to manage except one party. This was composed of three young men—two of them brothers, and sons of the head of our house, Grant, Perkins and Company. The two young Grants, like many other rich men's sons, were very conceited—the more, perhaps, because they'd never done a stroke of work in their lives—and they were always up to some mischief or other, till once I had to threaten to put them in irons, if they didn't obey the rules of the ship.

After that they left off skylarking, but turned sulky and made a good many dinners uncomfortable by covert sneers which one couldn't resent.

Their companion was an army officer, on a year's leave, of the name of Ramsey, a noble young fellow as ever I saw, but full of high spirits. He was a man of very great personal strength and agility, and could beat any sailor in the ship climbing.

You must know that it's an old sea custom that the first time a landsman goes up the rigging, any of the sailors can go after him, and if they can catch him, they can tie him there unless he "pays his footing," as they term it. But none of our fellows could catch Ramsey. I have known him scamper up the shrouds like a monkey and defy them all to catch him, when the whole ship's company would come swarming after him. He went up the mainmast one time, and they thought they had him sure, but the active fellow, seeing that every backstay was occupied by the enemy, slid down the mainmast and then up the main, and then up again, down the main, royal stay to the foretop gallant cross-trees, and so down the jib-stay to the end of the jib-boom, and ran in, laughing.

The two Grants were always setting Ramsey up to mischief of some kind, and especially when the ladies were on deck. A sneer at his not daring to do such and such a thing would always send Ramsey to do it. One day, however, they pressed him too far, and the result was I had to stop all skylarking in the rigging.

It had begun to blow a pretty stiff breeze at last, rapidly becoming a gale, when we had to send down our sternsails and skysails, and it was as much as the ship would bear to keep her royals spread. We were all gathered on the poop-deck, watching the flying-fish and dolphins, when Charley Grant, the elder of my two pests, observed:

"Say, Captain Coffin, do you think you've got a man would dare to go up above the royal yards to-day?"

"Any one in the ship would, if I ordered him," young gentleman, I said. "But I would only send old sailors to-day. It takes a man who knows how to hold on to furl royals on a day like this."

"Bah, captain," said Tom Grant, the other brother, sneeringly. "It's not half as bad as you make out. There's Ramsey, who never was at sea in his life, and I'll bet he can go up to the main truck in a typhoon, leaving alone a breeze like this."

"You sailors are a set of old grannies, anyhow," chimed in Charley. "I'll bet Ramsey can go to the main truck to-day."

"Indeed, and Ramsey isn't going to break his neck for you," retorted the young officer, laughing good-naturedly. "I'm tired of footing about the rigging to amuse you lazy people down on deck."

"Quite right, Mr. Ramsey," said I, warmly. "You're a splendid gymnast, but I don't like to see you risking your life for nothing. When I send the men up, it's on duty, and if they lose their lives, it can't be helped."

"Bah!" sneered ill-conditioned Tom.

"Ramsey's turning prudent!"

"Well, suppose I am? Isn't it time?" asked Ramsey.

"Too prudent by half," said Charley.

"He daren't go."

"I dare go anywhere," said Ramsey, flushing; "but I don't care to go. Go you."

"I'm not a famous gymnast," said Charley, sneering. "I see you're only a fine-weather one, too, for all your blowing."

Well, you see, words went on, till young Ramsey was fool enough to declare that not only would he go up to the royals, but that he would shin up the skylopes above, perfectly bare of rigging as they were, and take a seat on the main truck. I knew him to be a perfect gymnast, or I would have ordered him not to do it; but I never thought that he would go higher than the royals, for the vessel was pitching and tossing so, that I expected he would see the impossibility of the feat when he got to the royal yard.

Well, to make a long story short, Ramsey threw off his coat and began to ascend the weather rigging, several of the ladies clapping their hands to encourage him, while only one was silent. This was Miss Emily Perkins, daughter of one of our house, who was going to Canton to see her father. I noticed that she was very pale, as he went higher, and two or three times I was on the point of calling Mr. Ramsey back; but he seemed to go up so confidently that I lost much of my own fears.

In fact, so long as a man is in the rigging, it is easier work to climb at sea than when lying still in port, for the vessel being always keeled over on one tack or the other, the weather rigging always offers an easy slope.

So that Ramsey's task was easy enough till he got to the cross-trees. After that there are no ratlines in most vessels, so that a man has to shin up the ropes; and besides this, the masts were swaying about in dizzy circles, the wind seeming to increase every moment. Before Ramsey got to the main royal yard, away went his hat to leeward, into the sea, amid the ironical cheers of the whole ship's company, who were clustered

below and looking up in amazement at the rash fellow.

Ramsey reached the royal yard safely, and rested there for a few minutes. He seemed to be tired, as well he might, for the swaying of the vessel rendered it a hard thing to hold on. I saw, however, that he was going higher.

"Come down, Ramsey!" I shouted. "Don't make a fool of yourself, or you'll be drowned!"

But he only shook his head, and turning to the bare, naked skylope beside him, commenced the ascent. Certainly he climbed splendidly, but I saw that he was very much tired. He kept on the weather side of the mast and got up the first eight feet very well, when the vessel gave a tremendous lurch that sent the main truck waving backward and forward in oscillations of seventy or eighty feet at a swing. The strain became too much for human strength, and a groan escaped from the whole ship's company as the poor fellow was swung round on the under side of the mast, lost the grasp of his legs, and remained, clinging desperately with his hands, swinging over the angry sea, less than a yard below the truck.

Every eye in the ship was riveted on him with intense suspense, even the helmsman's. It was this that caused the accident. The steersman, in his excitement, had allowed the vessel to luff up into the wind, and her sails were all shaking, while the heavy sea made her pitch terribly.

"Keep her full, you sir!" I bellowed to the helmsman, but it was too late. As the sails filled again, the ship bowed over with a great surge, and the next minute Ramsey lost his hold and fell into the sea.

Then there was a noise, I tell you—women screaming, men shouting, Miss Perkins in hysterics, the sails thundering and flapping as the helmsman—this time by my order—threw the vessel into the wind. I saw Ramsey come up, and threw him the life-buoy just in time, and then a great wave hid him from our sight. We got out a boat as quick as we could, but it was half an hour before we got him in, nearly exhausted, and it cost the boat another hour's pulling to get to the ship.

After that adventure I interdicted skylarking in the rigging, and even wild Ramsey never again repeated the experiment of reaching the main truck.

The following is a verbatim report of a conversation which recently took place between a father and his model child: Father—"My son, which would you rather do—learn a hymn or eat a bun?" Model son (who has been questioned before)—"Father, I would rather learn a hymn."

Father—"Then, my son, you shall have two buns."

Recollections of the West.

Old Willoughby and the Robbers.

BY CAPT. BRUNN ADAMS.

"Yes, that is Old Willoughby's grave," said my host, in reply to a question of mine. He died only last year; and, although he was several years older than I am—and you know, lad, that I am no youngster—yet he was the most active man of the two, and, as I thought, far healthier and stronger.

Willoughby was a wonderful man; he had been my father's servant—his "body-guard"—he used to call him—and never did a stroke of work save to wait upon, look after and make him comfortable.

When the old man died, Willoughby took me in hand, assuming precisely the same relation to me that he had always borne to him, and absolutely declining to permit any one, no matter who, the privilege of meddling with my affairs. I mean those appertaining to my personal comfort and welfare.

In all my journeys—and they were frequently long, tedious, and sometimes dangerous—Willoughby accompanied me, and after a while he came to be just as well known, and fully as much respected in the circuit, as I was myself.

There comes Willoughby and the Judge, used to be the remark as we would ride into town; and I sometimes thought the sly fellow hugely enjoyed the manner in which we were classified.

We were both getting well on in years when I came to this place to live.

I had long had my eye upon the farm, liking the location, the surrounding scenery, the river, and that wild range of hills that you see looming up across yonder; though, I think, if I had known what those same hills contained, the kind of fruit they bore, if I may use such an expression, I don't believe I'd have been so eager to settle down in such close proximity.

From the very first Willoughby regarded those hills with a suspicious eye, and when on several occasions, while hunting

necessary in regulating our movements during the day.

Any unusual commotion or haste would certainly betray the fact that we knew of the contemplated attack, and as I wished, above all things, to give these fellows a good, lasting lesson, this was to be avoided as much as possible.

Three of the steadiest and most trusted of the men were sent in as many different directions to inform the neighbors of what was on hand, while Willoughby and myself looked after getting the house in order to receive our nocturnal visitors, and also to load and 'fix up' generally such arms as were about the place.

There were two double-barrels, an old flint-locked musket, a pair of heavy 'horse' pistols, and my favorite rifle; a pretty good arsenal for an emergency.

Shortly after dark my friends began to drop in, one at a time, and from different directions, so as to avoid notice.

When all were assembled, at between nine and ten o'clock, I counted, or 'reviewed' the army, and found it to consist of five able-bodied men, each bearing his own rifle, besides myself, Willoughby and half a dozen of the hands.

More than enough, I mentally exclaimed, as I ran my eye over the assemblage, but I did not then know the kind of men with whom we were to come in conflict.

Eleven, twelve, and one o'clock passed, and there had as yet been no signs of the enemy.

I have neglected to state what manner of castle it was that we were collected to defend, and as it is necessary for the full understanding of what transpired that I should do so, I must ask your patience a moment.

My house was what is known as a double log-cabin, different, however, from the generality of such in the fact that it was two and a half stories high, and unusually high stories at that.

Tall ceilings, plenty of ventilation, etc., were my hobby, and in building I had given free scope to it.

Through the center of the building ran a wide hall, at each end of which swung large, heavy folding-doors, the only en-

"I forgot to mention that once, during the fiercest part of the attack upon the door, a sudden scuffling of feet and what appeared to be a fall, was heard overhead, but every one supposing that it was some one else of our party watching from the upper windows, took no heed of the incident.

In fifteen minutes the robbers were again ready for assault, this time to make it by means of fire.

They had gone off to the barn, dragged out a large wagon from its shed, and having loaded this with dry hay from the loft, were pushing it toward the house.

Their intention was only too evident. Sheltered by the mass of hay, they could with impunity advance it near enough to the house, in fact, against it, so that when it was fired, the building would be certain to catch.

We used our guns pretty lively, you may rest assured, but still the wagon and its combustible load advanced steadily, and ere long a loud bump, accompanied by a jar, told us that the firebrand was in position.

A bright light flashed up as one of the villains struck his tinder, when, suddenly, a loud, clear voice rung out, coming from somewhere up above:

"Stop dar! You jess sot dat hay afire, an' by de Lord, I'll dung him into him!"

A loud shout of surprise, or rather dismay, from the party outside followed these words, that I knew could have been uttered only by Willoughby, and anxious to know what it was he was threatening them with, I ran up stairs to the second floor, and failing to find the faithful fellow there, I continued on up to the garret.

At the further end of the long, low apartment I saw the figure of a man darkening the window, beyond which the ruddy glare of the now brightly-burning torch below could be seen.

As I drew near, I saw it was Willoughby, and, moreover, that he held, half-out of the narrow aperture, the struggling form of a man, who, on further inspection, I saw was securely bound. At the same instant I heard the exclamation, "It is the capt'n, by—!" from below.

"Yes, it am, an' des sartin as you fires dat hay, I'll drag him onto it!" shouted back Willoughby.

"How in the name of wonder did you get that man?" I asked.

"He done clomb up heah, Mass' Harrison, an' I jess grab him an' trow de ladder down," was the reply.

"Such had been the case," Willoughby had heard them with the ladder, at the end of the building, and slipping off, he went up to intercept them at the attic window.

The result was as he had stated, and as good luck would have it, the first, and only one who had entered was the captain of the band. The falling of the ladder was considered accidental, and until Willoughby appeared at the window with his captive, the robbers had thought that he was safe inside, planning or working a way by which they might enter.

Well, this finished up the matter. Of course the captain forbade any further attack, stipulating that he would order his men off, and promising never to attack me again, if he were permitted to go free. We could do nothing else, and finally it was agreed that we should hold him until morning, while his men should withdraw immediately.

This was done, and at daylight the fellow was turned loose, and he struck out for the hills without waste of time, I assure you. Singular to say, he kept his word, and I was never again molested by them."

Beat Time's Notes.

THE NEW CURE.

DR. APOTHECARY'S renowned Extract will accomplish every thing from the raising of the dead to the removing of dandruff. People must not confound it with other humbugs if they confound it at all.

It is good for all complaints. A correspondent of the *Bungtown Reaver* writes that he has suffered for years from his wife's complaints of having to wear her old dresses so long, etc.; two bottles of it had the effect of making her perfectly contented with her old dresses, and added fifty subscribers to their paper list.

A man who had the bronchitis in the ankle and the red swelling on the nose, said that he had tried many doctors, as he thought a small bill with a good many doctors was better than a good many bills with one doctor, but got no relief until he took the Extract.

Another writes that he has taken the Extract for the last seven years—in all, about a barrel of it—and was effectually relieved of a corn. And another thing of no trifling consequence, the case is that the man is seven years older than he was when he began taking it.

An auctioneer hastens to say that he couldn't lie down at night for three years; now he lies all the time.

No family should be without. A Royal Arch Mason and Bricklayer writes that he has kept house with it and one old table for several years.

One young lady went off in the first stages of consumption; she afterward took one bottle of the Extract and was able to walk back, and is now open for engagements as champion ealst.

A lady had a violent cough; she used the Extract, and her friends insinuate that the cough is completely gone—so is she.

A landlord had weak coffee. Some of the boarders rubbed the Extract on the back of the coffee-pot, and the effect is that the coffee is now strong and robust.

A farmer states that his son got very bad—in fact, he was the worst boy he ever saw; his language also got very low. The Extract was applied to his back and rubbed in with a cow-hide. The boy improves.

An engineer had the affection of the brain for many years. It gave him constant pain. One bottle of the Extract removed the brain, and he is now able to run for Congress.

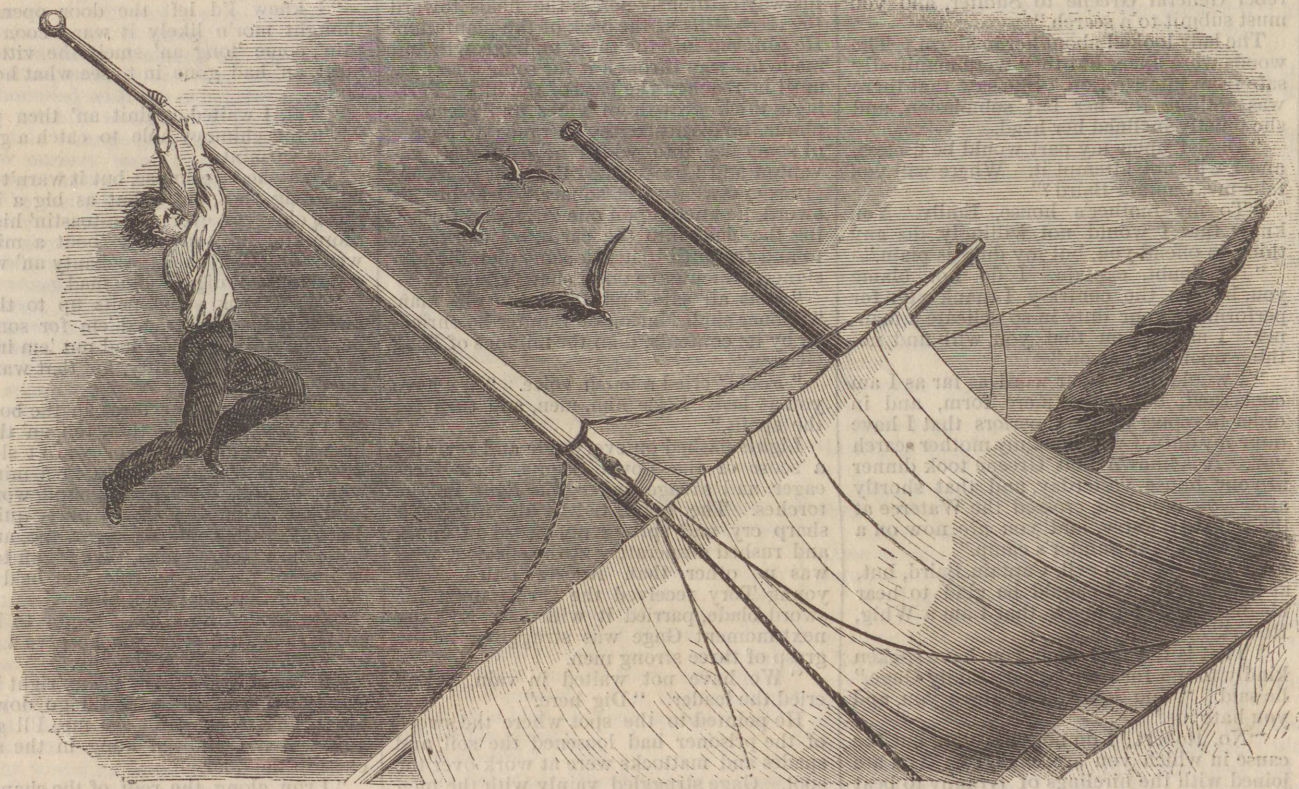
One man states that he couldn't eat more than four solid meals, with lunches, a day; nor sleep more than all night and part of the afternoon; one bottle restored him.

It gave an entire new constitution to one of the Southern States.

Five bottles in a package. You can take it in broken or unbroken doses—that is, with or without breaking the package. You go to the forks of the road and look at the guide-board for directions.

Two barrels of it have been known to remove a pimple on the nose.

No money required until the medicine is bought. BEAT TIME, Agent.



THE MAIN TRUCK.